The Bible Study Union Lessons

THE COMPLETELY GRADED SERIES

Witnesses for Christ

What It Meant to be a Christian In the Early Centuries

TEACHER'S MANUAL

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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Witnesses for Christ

WHAT IT MEANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN IN THE EARLY CENTURIES

A Course of Study for Classes of Boys and Girls Twelve to Fifteen Years Old

By HAROLD B. HUNTING

Teacher's Manual

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INTRODUCTION.

Subject Matter of the Course.

This course of study presents those aspects of early Christian history which should prove interesting and helpful to a boy or girl of twelve. Many facts of some importance in this period are almost entirely ignored, for example, debates over doctrine, and the development of an ecclesiastical organization. On the other hand, the actual everyday experiences of the Christians have been described as vividly as possible. Lesson 1 gives a general view of the relation between the Christian movement and the Roman paganism, and traces in broad outlines the history of the conflict between them. Lessons 2 to 5 consist chiefly of flashlight scenes from the life of the Christians in the second century, and bring out the vital ideals for which they stood. Lessons 6 and 7 are typical stories of martyrdom, showing the heroic loyalty of the Christians to their ideals. Lessons 8 to 11 deal with the history of Christianity in the closing years of the empire.

Purpose of the Course.

The purpose of the course is to lead the pupils to take sides with the Christians. The stories of heroism and martyrdom should inspire to courageous Christian living, while bringing home the fact that in comparison with the first three centuries it is an easy thing to be a Christian to-day.

The course contains lessons for three months. It may be used by any class of pupils from twelve to fifteen years old, either in the summer quarter, or at some other time in the year. It is designed primarily for the final three months of the Junior department, after the Junior Bible has been completed.

Method of the Course.

At each session, it is recommended that the teacher spend the first half of the period discussing the lesson story which was told orally the preceding Sunday and which the pupils have been studying in the text-book during the week. Use as a basis the questions and topics in the pupil's book. Close this part of the work with a rapid drill on this lesson using, if desired, the questions in the pupil's book under the heading

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"To sum up." In the latter half of the period, tell in your own words the story of the advance lesson. In order to do this successfully read carefully, not only the story in the pupil's book, but also the additional information for teachers in each lesson in the teacher's manual. Brood over the story until it lives again in your own imagination.

In short, on the first Sunday, explain the course and tell the story of the first lesson. The second Sunday, discuss Lesson 1, and tell the story of Lesson 2, and so on. Each lesson therefore covers two Sunday school periods.

Some Useful Books.

Rowe: *Landmarks in Christian History. First quarter. (Both Pupil's Text-Book and Teacher's Manual.)*

Fisher: *The History of the Christian Church.*

Harnack: *Expansion of Christianity.*

Uhlhorn: *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.*

Uhlhorn: *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church.*

Schaff: *History of the Christian Church.* Vols. II-III.

Rainey: *The Ancient Catholic Church.*

Lecky: *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne.*

Bulwer: *The Last Days of Pompeii.*

Sienkiewicz: *Quo Vadis.*

The Ante-Nicene Fathers, translated into English.

The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, especially Eusebius' Church History.

Witnesses for Christ

Teacher's Manual

LESSON 1.

WHY THE CHRISTIANS WERE PERSECUTED IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

Purpose of the Lesson.

By giving a general view of the conflict between Christianity and paganism, this lesson provides a mental framework for the remainder of the course. It should also strike the spiritual keynote of the entire course, by giving the pupil at the very outset, some idea of the value of the ideals for which the Christians struggled, and thus leading him at once to "take sides" with them.

Assigning the First Lesson.

The first Sunday of the course may well be spent in introductory explanations. If you have just finished Part IV of the Junior Bible, review the facts regarding persecution which are given in that course, especially the story of the Neronian persecution. If the course is being used independently of the Junior Bible, begin the class session somewhat as follows:

These lessons, boys and girls, tell the story of the early Christians during the centuries between the death of the apostles and the conversion of the Roman empire. It is a story of struggle and persecution. From the very beginning the Christians had to face persecution. Jesus Himself was crucified. Stephen was stoned. Paul was bitterly persecuted both by Jews and Gentiles. Again and again he was attacked by mobs. On such occasions, Paul usually found protection with the Roman officials. In the year 64 A.D., however, the Roman government, under the wicked emperor Nero, turned against the Christians, and henceforth instead of being their protector, became more and more their persecutor. In that year there was a great conflagration in the city of Rome, and the rumor was circulated that Nero himself had started

it. In order to shift the blame to somebody else, Nero accused the Christians, who were already quite numerous and unpopular. A large number of Christians were arrested, and most cruelly put to death. Some were crucified, others were wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, and were thrown to fierce dogs. Nero even illuminated his own gardens at night with burning Christians, who had been smeared with pitch and chained to stakes. So horrible were these tortures that the people in general began to sympathize with the Christians, in spite of the crimes which they were thought to have committed.

With this introduction, the teacher should go on and tell in his own words the story of the first lesson. In order to do this successfully, read carefully the lesson in the pupil's book, and the further information for teachers, on pages 3-7 of this manual. Make the facts thoroughly your own, and then present them freely, vividly, and with imagination. This will be sufficient to occupy the hour.

Discussing the Lesson.

The first part of the second session in the course should be spent in discussing Lesson 1, using as a basis, if desired, the questions in the pupil's book, somewhat as follows:

1 and 2. Bring out clearly that the Romans were by nature probably no more immoral than we are to-day. If the average American or Englishman could be transported back into the first century, he would doubtless go to gladiatorial shows quite as freely as the average Roman of those days. Bring out also that the persecution of the Christians was often inspired by good motives. Suppose you had been a Roman governor, and had honestly believed that unless the temples of the old gods were well patronized, disaster would come on the whole country, would you have been doing your duty, if you had not tried to compel the Christians to sacrifice to these gods? As a matter of fact, some of the best emperors, like Marcus Aurelius, were most severe in this persecution. Diocletian also was personally honest and patriotic. In this connection speak of the more wholesome features of ancient life and society, as given below, page 4.

3. This question supplements the preceding two. What do you think will be the attitude of future generations of Christians toward capital punishment? Certainly we ourselves

are already awakening to the fact that many of our penal customs are barbarous: *e.g.*, the lock-step, the shorn head, the striped suits, and all marks that tend to brand the criminal as a hopeless outcast.

4. Draw out the curious fact of human nature, that men are likely to dislike those whose conduct is in any way worthier than theirs. Is it a temptation that we ourselves are subject to?

5. Bring out how easy it is to be misled by false statements about other men. The intelligent Roman presupposed in the question should have replied to his informant, "How do you know the Christians do these things?" Certainly he should never have passed on the slander to others, until he had talked with the Christians themselves, or read their books. Do we misjudge "anarchists"? Do we misjudge individuals, merely because we believe hearsay?

Conclude this discussion with a rapid drill review, using the "sum up" questions in the pupil's book.

Information for the Teacher.

Morals and Religion in Ancient Heathen Society. It is sometimes said that society at this period was honeycombed with moral corruption. This is probably an exaggeration. If human nature had become wholly corrupt, Christianity would have had nothing to build on. There were indeed members of the so-called "upper classes," who became intoxicated by their wealth and power, and who made a spectacle of themselves, just as such people sometimes do to-day. Society as a whole was of course far below the moral level of our own civilization, which, imperfect though it is, plainly shows the results of centuries of Christian influence. We have abolished slavery. In those days, every one who could afford it owned one or more slaves. Moreover, vice and corruption were more common, and flaunted themselves more openly, than to-day. The Christian sentiments of sympathy and pity were even despised as weak and unmanly, by men who were in many ways worthy. Nevertheless, the sturdy virtues of the early days of Greece and Rome had by no means wholly disappeared. There were many homes in which truth, purity, and honor were cherished.

Moreover, just at this period a wave of religious aspiration was sweeping over the Roman empire. The crude mythological religions of an earlier time had been broken down to a large

extent by Greek philosophy. Five centuries before Christ, Xenophanes had ridiculed the gods of his countrymen, by saying, "If oxen and lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and fashion images, as men do, they would make the pictures and images of their gods in their own likeness; horses would make them like horses, oxen like oxen." Skeptical ideas like these grew more and more common; and increasing numbers of men lost faith in Jupiter and Juno and Minerva, and the other ancient deities. Yet "man is incurably religious," and to satisfy their deepest longings, people were turning eagerly to all sorts of religious doctrines, new and old, especially to those imported from Eastern lands. All sorts of religious societies were organized in Rome and other leading cities. Many of these had secret ceremonies for the initiation of members, and were called "mysteries." Thus there were societies for the worship of Mithras, one of the Persian deities, and others for the worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis. Some of these societies were corrupt morally. In others, men were genuinely seeking deliverance from sin, and a way of attaining a purer and holier life.

The Fascination of the Gladiatorial Shows. "Alypius had gone before me to Rome, to study law, and there he was carried away in an extraordinary manner with an incredible eagerness after the gladiatorial shows. For although he was utterly opposed to such spectacles, it happened that he was one day met by certain fellow students of his acquaintance who were returning from dinner, and with a friendly violence, they drew him, vehemently protesting and resisting, into the amphitheatre, on a day of these cruel and deadly shows. "Though you drag my body to that place," he protested, "can you force me to give my mind and lend my eyes to these shows?" When they had arrived thither, however, and had taken their places as they could, the whole place became excited with the inhuman sports. But he, shutting up the doors of his eyes, forbade his mind to roam abroad after such wickedness. But upon the fall of one in the fight, a mighty cry from the whole crowd stirred him strongly, and overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes. And as soon as he saw that blood, he therewith imbibed a sort of savageness, nor did he turn away but fixed his eye, drinking in madness unconsciously, and was delighted with the guilty contest, and drunken with the bloody pastime. He looked, shouted, was excited and carried away with him

the madness which would stimulate him to return." Augustine, Confessions, Bk. VI, Chap. VIII.

Nero's Persecution of Christians. To check this rumor (that Nero himself had set fire to Rome) those who were called Christians by the mob and hated for their moral enormities, were substituted in his place as culprits by Nero and afflicted with the most exquisite punishments. Christ, from whom the name was given, was put to death during the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Although checked for the time, this pernicious superstition broke out again, not only in Judea, where the evil originated, but throughout the city, in which the atrocities and shame from all parts of the world center and flourish. Therefore, those who confessed were first seized, then on their information a great multitude were convicted, not so much of the crime of incendiarism, as of hatred of the human race. The victims who perished also suffered insults, for some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs, while others were fixed to crosses and burnt to light the night when daylight had failed. Nero had offered his gardens for the spectacle and was giving a circus show, mingling with the people in the dress of a driver, or speeding about in a chariot. Although they were criminals who deserved the most severe punishment, yet a feeling of pity arose since they were put to death not for the public good, but to satisfy the rage of an individual.—Tacitus: *Annals, XV, 44.*

Correspondence between Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, and the Emperor Trajan. I have never taken part in the trials of Christians; hence I do not know for what crime or to what extent it is customary to punish or investigate. I have followed this procedure in the case of those who have been brought before me. I asked them whether they were Christians a second and a third time and with threats of punishment; I questioned those who confessed; I ordered those who were obstinate to be executed. Others of similar madness, because they were Roman citizens, I have noted for sending to the city. I have found nothing but a vicious, extravagant superstition. Consequently I make haste to consult you. For it seemed to me that the subject would justify consultation, especially on account of the number of those in peril. For many of all ages, of every rank, and even of both sexes, are and will be called into danger. The infection of this superstition has not

only spread to the cities, but even to the villages and country districts.—*Condensed from Pliny's Letter.*

You have followed the correct procedure, my Secundus, in conducting the cases of those who were accused before you as Christians, for no general rule can be laid down as a set form. They ought not to be sought out; if they are brought before you and convicted they ought to be punished; provided that he who denies that he is a Christian, and proves this by making supplication to our gods, however much he may have been under suspicion in the past, shall secure pardon on repentance. In the case of no crime should attention be paid to anonymous charges, for they afford a bad precedent and are not worthy of our age.—Reply of Trajan, Pliny: *Epistles: X, 96, 97.*

A Selection from Tertullian's Apology. "You do not worship the gods," you say; "and you do not offer sacrifices for the emperors." Well, we do not offer sacrifice for others, for the same reason that we do not for ourselves—namely, that your gods are not at all the objects of our worship. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief ground of charge against us—nay, it is the sum-total of our offending; and it is worthy then of being inquired into, if neither prejudice nor injustice be the judge, the one of which has no idea of discovering the truth, and the other simply and at once rejects it. We do not worship your gods, because we know that there are no such beings. This, therefore, is what you should do: You should call on us to demonstrate their non-existence, and thereby prove that they have no claim to adoration; for only if your gods were truly so, would there be any obligation to render divine homage to them. And punishment even were due to Christians, if it were made plain that those to whom they refused all worship were indeed divine. But you say, they are gods. We protest and appeal from yourselves to your knowledge; let that judge us; let that condemn us, if it can deny that all of these gods of yours were but men.

I do not dwell on the philosophers, contenting myself with a reference to Socrates, who, in contempt of the gods, was in the habit of swearing by an oak, and a goat, and a dog. In fact, for this very thing, Socrates was condemned to death, that he overthrew the worship of the gods. Plainly, at one time as well as another, that is, always truth is disliked. However, when ruing their judgment the Athenians inflicted

punishment on his accusers, and set up a golden image of him in a temple, the condemnation was in the very act rescinded, and his witness was restored to its former value. Diogenes, too, makes utter mock of Hercules; and the Roman cynic Varro brings forward three hundred Joves, or Jupiters they should be called, all headless.

The Good Qualities of Christians. They have the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself graven upon their hearts; and they observe them, looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and life in the world to come. They do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor covet the things of others; they honor father and mother and love their neighbors; they judge justly, and they never do to others what they would not wish to happen to themselves; they appeal to those who injure them, and try to win them as friends; they are eager to do good to their enemies; they are gentle and easy to be entreated; they abstain from all unlawful conversation and from all impurity, they despise not the widow nor oppress the orphan; and he that has gives ungrudgingly for the maintenance of him who has not. If they see a stranger, they take him under their roof, and rejoice over him as over a very brother; for they call themselves brethren not after the flesh but after the spirit.—Aristides: *Apology*, Ch. 15.

LESSON 2.

AN INVITATION TO A SUPPER.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To present the ideal of brotherhood. The story of the supper gives an opportunity to emphasize the importance of brotherly courtesy, in table manners, and home life in general.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

If there is one thing which every one likes to receive, it is an invitation to a dinner or a supper. In our homes, the evening meal is the happiest time of the day. Some folks call it supper, and others call it dinner. Whatever we call it, we are glad every day when the time for it comes round, not only because we are hungry, but because we have such pleasant times. This lesson is a story of a church supper. We have good times

at church suppers too. (Refer, perhaps, to a recent church supper in your church.) It is a story of a poor laborer, among the early Christians, who was very glad indeed to be invited to one of the suppers of the church in Rome, both because he was nearly starved, and because he was homesick and lonesome.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Lycidas could show the spirit of brotherhood at the supper in one form which was neglected by some of those present. What form was that? In what way do you suppose those new converts were rude? See quotation from Clement, below. Lycidas might also have been able to contribute good stories and merry jokes. Tell the class the two jokes which Clement mentions as proper and wholesome.

2. Draw out from the pupils what they know about insurance. How many different kinds of insurance are there to-day? (Fire, life, accident, health.) To what extent did the early Christian churches take the place of these various kinds of insurance companies?

3. Have some pupil look up 2 Thess. 3:10. See also quotation below from Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Do you think it likely that the Christians were frequently imposed on in this way? Of those who profess to be converted in our city missions, on cold winter nights, what are some of them seeking? What fact helped to deter people from becoming Christians from unworthy motives?

4. Bring out that in this story, Lycidas was a fellow Christian, and fellow church member, with those who helped him. The Good Samaritan, in Jesus' story, was bound to the wounded man by the roadside by no ties save those of their common humanity. Which is the higher ideal of brotherhood? The Christians lost this higher ideal to some extent, not altogether, however. See below. In one respect, the Christians kept the old broad ideal in a remarkable way. How many different races and nationalities were included in that brotherhood at Rome?

5. In discussing this question, let the teacher be exceedingly reticent. If the pupils will mention the matter of good table manners at home, or of courtesy toward foreigners, and lowly persons, well and good. Otherwise, let the question go unanswered. Do not preach or moralize.

Information for the Teacher.

Everyday Life in Ancient Rome. Suppose we visit this house where Lycidas went to the church supper, and note just how people lived in those days. As we approach it, we notice that it is a one-story structure of wood or brick. In the crowded parts of Rome there were apartment houses, or tenements, of a very modern sort, some of them four and even five stories high. Lycidas has been lodging in one of them. Most private dwellings, however, were one-story structures. We notice that there are glass windows in the house, but the glass is not so clear, nor are the panes so large as ours to-day. As we enter the front door, we find ourselves in a large central hall, probably with a stone floor. There may be a picture of a dog in the mosaic in front of the door, with the words "cave canem," "beware of the dog." On the sides of the hall are various chambers. In the rear is a wide passage leading to the peristyle or enclosed garden. Light comes in through the roof. In the center of the hall is a marble basin with a fountain. Gold fish are swimming in the water, which enters the house through lead pipes from the city aqueducts. The Romans were masters in the art of building aqueducts and sewers. The Cloaca Maxima, in Rome, is in use as a sewer to this day.

While we are waiting for the other guests, suppose we take a seat on a couch and look about us. Since the day is chilly, charcoal is burning in a brazier, the fumes passing out through the open skylight. We notice that the furniture is not upholstered, but there is an abundance of cushions. There are very few chairs. People reclined on couches in many circumstances when we would use chairs; for example they reclined at meals, and the room which we call "the sitting room" they called the "reclining room." There may be a few rugs on the floor, otherwise the stone mosaic is without covering. There are no framed pictures on the wall, but the wall itself may be adorned with paintings. Near the basin in the center there is probably a water clock. This is constructed on the principle of the sand hour glass, and one can tell what time of day it is, by observing how much water has passed into the lower half of the contrivance. Through an open door we may see a mirror of polished silver, in one of the chambers on the side of the hall. On a small stand is a bronze or silver lamp, in which olive oil is burned with a wick. Unlike our lamps, it has no chimney, and is therefore a somewhat smoky affair.

This lack of illumination perhaps accounts for the fact that the ancients rose much earlier in the morning than we, and went to bed earlier at night. They were anxious to make the most of the daylight hours. By and by the supper is ready, and we go with the others into the dining room in the rear of the house. Before we recline on our couches around the table, some one says "grace." As regards the table furnishings, we see very little porcelain, or china, perhaps none at all. There was indeed a process for making porcelain, in those days, but it was very expensive. The cups and plates on the table may be of silver, but are more probably of earthenware. There are spoons, but no knives and forks. One wonders how they could manage a tough beefsteak. The food served is much like ours. There is no butter, but much olive oil is used. We notice that the food is very highly seasoned with pepper, like the food in Mexico and other hot countries to-day.

The Love Feast Among the Early Christians. (In the following passage Tertullian is defending the Christians from the charge that their feasts are extravagant.)

"You abuse our humble feasts, on the ground that they are extravagant—to us, it seems, applies the saying of Diogenes: 'The people of Megara feast as though they were going to die on the morrow'—but one sees more readily the mote in another's eye than the beam in his own. You must get the accountants to tell you what the sacrificial banquets cost—the smoke from the banquet of Serapis will call out the firemen. Yet about the modest supper of the Christians alone, a great ado is made. Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it *agape*, that is, love. Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain, since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy. If the object of our feast be good, in the light of that consider its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger, as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say, 'enough,' as those who remember that even during the night they are to worship God. They talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their hearers. After the washing of the hands, and the bringing in of the lights, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God. As the feast is commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed.

We go from it not like troops of mischief-doers, nor bands of vagabonds—but as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet."—Tertullian: *Apology*, 39.

A Christian Ideal of Good Manners at Feasts. (The following passages are from Book II. of "The Instructor" by Clement of Alexandria. They deal with general questions regarding good manners and morals in social intercourse. Many of the author's precepts may well have been suggested to him by what he had seen at the love feasts of his fellow Christians.)

"From all slave manners and excess we must abstain, and touch what is set before us in a decorous way; keeping the hand and couch and chin free of stains, preserving the grace of the countenance undisturbed, and committing no indecorum in the act of swallowing; but stretching out the hand at intervals in an orderly manner. We must guard against speaking anything while eating, for the voice becomes disagreeable and inarticulate when it is confined by full jaws. Nor is it suitable to eat and to drink simultaneously. We must guard against those articles of food which persuade us to eat when we are not hungry, bewitching the appetite. For is there not within a temperate simplicity, a wholesome variety of eatables? Bulbs, olives, certain herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, all kinds of cooked food without sauces? And if flesh is wanted, let roast rather than boiled be served. 'Have you anything to eat here?' said the Lord to His disciples after the resurrection; and they as taught by Him to practise frugality, 'gave Him a piece of broiled fish.' And in addition to these it is not to be overlooked that those who eat according to the Word are not debarred from dainties such as honeycomb.

"The natural, temperate and necessary beverage for the thirsty is water. I, therefore, admire those who have adopted an austere life, and who are fond of water, the medicine of temperance, and flee as far as possible from wine, shunning it as they would the danger of fire. It is proper therefore that boys and girls should keep as far as possible away from this medicine. For it is not right to pour into the burning season of life the hottest of all liquids—wine—adding as it were, fire to fire.

"Pleasantry is allowable, not waggery. Besides, even laughter must be kept in check, for when given vent to in the right manner, it indicates orderliness, but when it issues differently it shows a want of restraint.

"For in a word, whatever things are natural to men, we must not eradicate from them, but rather impose on them limits and suitable times. For man is not to laugh on all occasions, because he is a laughing animal, any more than a horse neighs on all occasions because he is a neighing animal. We are not to laugh perpetually, for that is going beyond bounds; nor in the presence of elderly persons, unless they indulge in pleasantry for our amusement. Nor are we to laugh before all and sundry, nor in every place, nor to every one, nor about everything.

"And elderly people, looking on the young as children, may, though but very rarely, be playful with them, joking with them to train them in good behaviour. For example, before a bashful and silent youth, one might, by way of pleasantry speak thus: 'This son of mine is perpetually talking.' For such a device is instructive, confirming as it does, what is present, by what is not present. Such certainly is the intention of him who says that a water drinker and a sober man gets intoxicated and drunk.

"'In a banquet,' it is said, 'reprove not thy neighbor, nor say to him a word of reproach.' For if the assemblies at festivals take place on account of affection, and the object of a banquet is friendliness toward those who assemble, and meat and drink accompany affection, how should not conversation be conducted in a rational manner, and puzzling people with questions be refrained from, for the sake of affection?"

Christian Charity toward their own Poor. Though we have our treasure chest, it is not made up of purchase money, as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able; for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund. For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, and drinking bouts, and eating houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house, such, too, as have suffered shipwreck: and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing but their fidelity to the cause of God's church, they become the nurslings of their confession. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another.—Tertullian: *Apology*, Chap. 39.

Christian Charity toward Outsiders. (In the following passage, Eusebius describes what took place at a time of pestilence, about 250 B.C.)

Then did the evidences of the universal zeal and piety of the Christians become manifest to all the heathen. For they alone in the midst of such ills showed their sympathy and humanity by their deeds. Every day some continued caring for and burying the dead, for there were multitudes who had no one to care for them; others collected in one place those who were afflicted by the famine, throughout the entire city, and gave bread to them all; so that the thing became noised abroad among all men, and they glorified the God of the Christians; and convinced by the facts themselves, confessed that they alone were truly pious and religious.—Eusebius.

The Duty of Finding Work for the Unemployed. But let every one that cometh in the name of the Lord be received, and afterward ye shall prove and know him; for ye shall have understanding right and left. If he who cometh is a wayfarer, assist him as far as ye are able; but he shall not remain with you, except for two or three days, if need be. But if he willeth to abide with you, being an artisan, let him work and eat; but if he hath no trade, according to your understanding see to it that, as a Christian, he shall not live with you idle. But if he willeth not so to do, he is a Christ-monger. Watch that ye keep aloof from such.—*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.*

LESSON 3.

AN AGE WHEN IT WAS DANGEROUS TO GO TO CHURCH.

Purpose of this Lesson.

To cultivate an appreciation for the blessings of church attendance.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

A while ago, I heard conversation something like this: "Are you going to church this morning, George?" And George answered, "Aw, I suppose I've got to, I promised dad and mother to go this year." A few days later, I ran across this picture, "The Pilgrims Going to Church." (Show picture, if

possible, Brown No. 55.) As I looked at the picture, I wondered why it was that George found church going such a bore, while those Puritan ancestors of ours were willing to brave the terrors of an Indian raid, as well as the cold of that winter day, in order to attend the church service. Our lesson takes us back to a time when it was even more dangerous to go to a gathering for Christian worship. It is a story of a boy about the age of you boys (or girls) who went to church with his mother in the early days of the Christians at Rome.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. The first answer to this question will naturally be, "in order to escape the notice of their enemies." Possibly there was another reason. How did the Christians spend the rest of the Sunday? Were they able to devote the whole day to rest and worship? Those who could control their own time, did indeed try to abstain to some extent from ordinary business on Sunday. (See Tertullian on Prayer, or "De Oratione," Chapter 23.) But it was not until the time of Constantine, that the day was observed to any considerable extent as a day of rest. Raise the question how the Christians happened to hold their meetings on Sunday, instead of on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Read to the class a sentence or two from the quotation from Justin, regarding the origin of the Christian observance of the Lord's day.

2. Bring out first the advantages which this gathering lacked: *e.g.*, a beautiful church building, with impressive architecture. How about the music? Do you suppose a modern musician would have thought it artistic? What did they have then which is lacking in some modern church gatherings? Something which cannot be seen, was it not? Something which cannot be heard. Something, however, which can be felt in the heart, namely, the presence of the living Spirit of Christ.

3. Suppose a Christian had stayed away from one of those meetings? What difference would it have made in his life? Bring out what the lesson story says regarding the source of the calmness and courage of the Christians, when they were led out to die. But suppose a Christian were not called upon to suffer martyrdom, what other experiences would have come to him, when he would need calmness and courage? Moreover, suppose the attendance at those meetings had fallen off, what

would have been the influence on the non-Christian inquirers who often attended them?

4 and 5. These questions offer the tactful teacher an opportunity to cultivate the appreciation of the pupils for church worship. Find out what parts of the ordinary church service already appeal to them most strongly. Perhaps it will prove to be the music. Ask what hymns they like best. Bring out the need of going to a church in the right spirit, ready to be attentive; also the need of sitting with persons who are accustomed to show a reverent and attentive spirit.

Information for the Teacher.

Christian Worship as described in Pliny's Letter to Trajan. "The Christians," he says, "affirmed that it was their custom to meet on a stated day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to a god; that they further bound themselves by an oath" (obviously the baptismal vow) "never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, adultery, never to break their word, nor to deny a trust when summoned to deliver it, after which they would separate and then reassemble for the purpose of eating in common a harmless meal."

Justin's Description of Christian Worship. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen: and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made

the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For he was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday) and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to his apostles and disciples, he taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.—Justin: *Apology*, Chap. 67.

Paul's Advice as to Christian Worship. Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men. In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people: and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving but to them that believe. If, therefore, the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed.

What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. And let the prophets speak by two or three and let the others discern. But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.—1 Cor. 14: 20-32.

The Value of Early Christian Gatherings for Worship. "Imagine such a religious service in its simplicity and youthful freshness, think of some church in times of persecution, expecting every moment that spies will betray them or a mob break in with yells and stones; yet hymns and psalms resound, the word of life is preached with plainness and holy earnestness, the congregation rise for prayer, the president leads, all join with

him and solemnly repeat the amen, all receive the body and blood of the Crucified One, whom perhaps they will soon follow in death, all unite in the feast of love, and with prayer and the kiss of peace, they depart—verily, we can understand how the heathen who only once attended such a service should in many instances have been thereby won forever. In their temples, dead ceremonial worship, here one of the living life-giving Word; there a dumb, inactive mass of spectators, while the priest alone had intercourse with deity, here a participating, singing, hearing, praying communion, all priests of the living God." Already, in 1 Cor. 14:24, 25, we read that unbelievers, who should see and hear this, would be deeply moved, fall on their faces, worship God, and confess that God was in them of a truth; and Eusebius, in his history, testifies explicitly: "The Holy Spirit wrought many wonders through them so that vast crowds, at the first hearing of the Gospel, eagerly received it into their hearts."

The Christians had what the heathen lacked, congregational life. Antiquity was not destitute of public spirit. On the contrary this existed to a special degree, as is proved by the numerous legacies and donations and by the erection of public buildings, of which inscriptions give us information. In the domain of industrial life the impulse to association was very strongly developed. Colleges were instituted for the different branches of industry, and endowed with funds for the relief of the sick and the dying, and for burials. There were colleges also for religious purposes, associations for the service of special deities. The provincial assemblies (Koinon) were also united by religious festivals. But there was nothing like the Christian societies in pagan antiquity. Polytheism did not admit of it. Public spirit developed itself simply on the political side. But as political life declined it offered less and less room for activity. Freedom ceased to exist, all were slaves of one. Every act by which a man distinguished himself, every illustrious achievement was attended with the danger of exciting the jealousy of the sovereign power. Municipal life retained at first more freedom, but its offices, which had formerly been sought as positions of honor, became in time so burdensome on account of the heavy expenses connected with them, that every one, as far as possible, avoided them so that it became necessary to enforce their acceptance by law. In the Christian communities, on the other hand, a circle was formed

which, although small, was all the more active. Controlled by the spirit of fellowship, and united in fraternal affection by a common faith, all the members labored, prayed and suffered together. In such a society there was room for every kind of activity, and opportunity for the most varied talents. There freedom found a sanctuary, and there in the midst of action and suffering, noble characters could unfold and grow strong.—Uhlhorn: *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.*

**Children in the Christian Meetings.* (In the following scene, a Christian, named Olinthus, is taking a priest of Isis, named Apaecides, to a meeting of the Christians.)

Halting at the threshhold, and knocking at the door, Olinthus said, "Peace be with you." A voice from within answered, "Peace with whom?" "The faithful," answered Olinthus, and the door opened: twelve or fourteen persons were sitting in a semi-circle, silent and seemingly absorbed in thought, and opposite to a crucifix rudely carved in wood.

They lifted their eyes, when Olinthus entered, without speaking. Olinthus himself, before he accosted them, knelt suddenly down, and his eyes fixed steadfastly on the crucifix, Apaecides saw that he prayed inly. This rite performed, Olinthus turned to the congregation, "Men and brethren," said he, "start not to behold amongst you a priest of Isis. He hath sojourned among the blind, but the Spirit hath fallen on him—he desires to see, to hear, and to understand."

There was one thing that greatly touched Apaecides. When the lecture was concluded, they heard a very gentle knock at the door. The password was given and replied to. The door opened, and two young children, the eldest of whom might have told its seventh year, entered timidly. They were the children of the master of the house, a dark and hardy Syrian, whose youth had been spent in pillage and bloodshed. The eldest of the congregation (a slave) opened to them his arms; they fled to the shelter, they crept to his breast, and his hard features smiled as he caressed them. Then opening the scroll he taught the infants that beautiful prayer which we still dedicate to the Lord, and still teach to our children. Then he told them in simple phrases, of God's love to the young, and how not a sparrow falls but his eye sees it. This lovely custom of infant initiation was long cherished by the early

*Quoted from "Last Days of Pompeii," by permission of Little, Brown, & Co.

church in memory of the words which said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," and was perhaps the origin of the superstitious calumny which ascribed to the Nazarenes the crime which the Nazarenes when victorious attributed to the Jew—namely the decoying of children to hideous rites at which they were secretly immolated.—From: *Last Days of Pompeii*, Bk. III, Chap. 3.

LESSON 4.

HOW A ROBBER CAPTAIN WAS CONVERTED.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To cultivate the missionary ideal, in the hearts of the boys and girls.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

In our last lesson we saw that non-Christians were often present at the meetings of the Christians. Sometimes these newcomers were strange characters. Imagine Jesse James, or Diamond Dick, or Gyp the Blood, dropping in at one of our midweek prayer meetings! It would be a sensation, would it not? Of course the early Christians did not have such persons at all their meetings. Yet they won many to Christ who had formerly lived wicked lives; and sometimes they had some surprising experiences. Suppose we attend in imagination a certain meeting of the church in Smyrna, perhaps about the year 150 A.D. Among those who come is a Christian leader named John, who, years ago, lived and taught in Smyrna. With him is a large, heavy man, a stranger to the others present. Yet some of the older members stare at him with wonder and astonishment. A whisper goes around the circle: can that be Lucretius, the Bandit? "Who is Lucretius the Bandit," we ask. "Why, he is the captain of the worst band of robbers in Asia. They have been robbing and murdering people for years. The last few weeks they have had a camp over yonder on the hill opposite the city, and we haven't had soldiers enough to drive them out." By and by the stranger rises to speak, and it turns out that he is indeed the robber captain. With shame, and yet with a strange look of happiness, he confesses that he has lived a wicked life. But now he wishes to repent and with God's help live the Christian life.

From this point go back and tell the whole story.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Does any person know his own heart or his own capacities either for evil or good? Do you think that there is any man so wicked but that there is not some goodness in him still, if only it could be awakened and developed? What would you say of a ball-team who should disband after a bad defeat?

2. Suppose that the other pastor in the church at Smyrna had gone out to Lucretius' camp, would he have succeeded in winning him back? Why not? In what respect was this visit on John's part a further proof of his tender and self-sacrificing love?

3. Undoubtedly Celsus would have had Lucretius crucified. How are criminals treated to-day? In the spirit of John, or the spirit of Celsus?

4. After drawing out the answers of the pupils, read a brief extract from Origen's answer to Celsus. (See below.)

5. This lesson offers a good opportunity to discuss the whole problem of "bad companions." Both sides of the question are presented. Lucretius was led astray by the influence of bad companions. On the other hand, the Christian slave girl, of necessity a daily companion of her heathen mistress, was able to lead her to Christ. What general rule can we formulate? Why should the Christian be able to wield a stronger influence than one who is not a Christian?

Information for the Teacher.

The story of the robber captain in this lesson is told by Clement of Alexandria in his sermon, "Who is the Rich Man that shall be saved." Aside from simplifying the language, only a few minor changes have been made in adapting it to the pupil's text in this course. While it was probably an error to connect this story with the Apostle John, there is no reason to doubt its essential historicity. No doubt there was a robber captain who was converted through the influence of some faithful Christian leader. The details given by Clement are exceedingly lifelike.

The story of the slave girl and her mistress is historical only in this sense, that such occurrences were common among the early Christians.

Origen's Reply to Celsus: The Gospel Invites Sinners to Make them Better. Immediately after this, Celsus, perceiving that

he has slandered us with too great bitterness, as if by way of defence expresses himself as follows: "That I bring no heavier charge than what the truth compels me, any one may see from the following remarks. Those who invite to participation in other mysteries make proclamation as follows: 'Every one who has clean hands, and a prudent tongue,' others again thus: 'He who is pure from all pollution and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived well and justly.' Such is the proclamation made by those who promise purification from sins. But let us hear what kind of persons these Christians invite. Every one, they say, who is a sinner, who is devoid of understanding, who is a child, and, to speak generally, whoever is unfortunate, him will the kingdom of God receive. Do you not call him a sinner, then, who is unjust, and a thief, and a housebreaker, and a poisoner, and a committer of sacrilege, and a robber of the dead? What others would a man invite if he were issuing a proclamation for an assembly of robbers?" Now, in answer to such statements, we say that it is not the same thing to invite those who are sick in soul to be cured, and those who are in health to the knowledge and study of divine things. We, however, keeping both these things in view, at first invite all men to be healed, and exhort those who are sinners to come to the consideration of the doctrines which teach men not to sin, and those who are devoid of understanding to those which beget wisdom, and those who are children to rise in their thoughts to manhood, and those who are simply unfortunate to good fortune, or—which is the more appropriate term to use—to blessedness. And when those who have been turned towards virtue have made progress, and have shown that they have been purified by the word, and have led as far as they can a better life, then and not before do we invite them to participation in our mysteries. "For we speak wisdom among them that are perfect."

Now here Celsus appears to me to have committed a great error, in refusing to those who are sinners by nature, and also by habit, the possibility of a complete transformation, alleging that they cannot be cured even by punishment. For it clearly appears that all men are inclined to sin by nature, and some not only by nature but by practice, while not all men are incapable of an entire transformation. For there are found in every philosophical sect, and in the word of God, persons who are related to have undergone so great a change that they may be proposed as a model of excellence of life.

And the name of Jesus can still remove distractions from the minds of men, and also take away diseases and produce a marvelous meekness of spirit and complete change of character, and a humanity and goodness and gentleness in those individuals who do not feign themselves to be Christians for the sake of subsistence or the supply of any mortal wants, but who have honestly accepted the doctrine concerning God and Christ and the judgment to come.

This statement is also untrue, that it is "only foolish and low individuals, and persons devoid of perception, and slaves and women and children of whom the teachers of the divine word wish to make converts." Such indeed does the Gospel invite, in order to make them better; but it invites also others who are very different from these, since Christ is the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that believe, whether they be intelligent or simple. Origen: *Reply to Celsus.*

Early Christian Evangelism. In the Roman Catacombs, among the oldest pictures, which certainly are as early as the second century, there is a representation of the gift of water in the desert as Moses smites the rock with his rod, and the people, with vessels for drinking, press round the gushing water. The picture unquestionably reflects the impression made at that time by the preaching of the word. In the barren wilderness of Heathenism where men had sought and dug for water so long that at last they were in despair of finding any, now welled freshly forth the fountain of living water springing up into everlasting life, and thus many a soul among the heathen thirsting for truth, many a seeker after wisdom in the schools of the philosophers, in the temples of gods the most diverse, or in Jewish houses of prayer, found here his deepest longing satisfied.

Doubtless, what principally attracted the heathen and held them fast was the fact that with the Christians was to be found full assurance of faith on the basis of a divine revelation. They did not ask: What is truth? but they preached "Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." They did not dispute *pro* and *contra* as in the schools, nor was their final conclusion that we can know nothing with certainty, but: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled of the word of life, that declare we unto you." They did not prate about trifles like the rhetoricians, who with the most incredible affectation of far-fetched words now

pronounced a eulogy upon obscurity or laziness, now discussed the dangerous illness of a member of the imperial household as a welcome theme for rhetorical artifice, but they spoke simply and plainly upon the highest themes and such as are necessary to the salvation of the soul. They said nothing about artificial ways of attaining the favor of God, such as the wandering magicians and hierophants scraped together in order that they might with much mystification proclaim them as the only saving wisdom—for example, when one of them tried to prove that the surest way to please God was always in libation to pour the wine exactly over the handle of the pitcher, as that is the only part which is not defiled by man's mouth. On the contrary, Christians bore witness to facts, the facts of Redemption: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"; Christ "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." To all was made known the one true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, preached not as the result of philosophical speculation, but upon the basis of His word, not as a secret doctrine for a few wise men, but publicly to all, even the poor and the insignificant. "Not only the rich among us," says Tatian, "seek for wisdom, but the poor also enjoy instruction gratuitously." "Every Christian laborer," says Tertullian, "both finds out God and manifests Him, though Plato affirms that it is not easy to discover the Maker of the universe, and when he is found it is difficult to make him known to all."—Uhlhorn: *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.*

Christianity, a Gospel of Healing and Salvation. The attitude of the early Christians to all who were sick in body or in mind is well illustrated in the legend which grew up regarding a correspondence between Jesus and Abgar, king of Edessa (in northern Syria). It was said that this king was afflicted with a terrible and incurable disease, and hearing of Jesus' wonderful cures, wrote to Him as follows:

"Abgarus, ruler of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Saviour who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of thee and of thy cures as performed by thee without medicines or herbs. For it is said that thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk, that thou cleansest lepers and castest out impure spirits and demons, and that thou healest those afflicted with lingering disease, and raisest the dead. And having heard all these things concerning thee, I

have concluded that one of two things must be true: either thou are God, and having come down from heaven thou doest these things, or else thou, who doest these things, are the Son of God. I have therefore written to thee to ask thee that thou wouldest take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against thee and are plotting to injure thee. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both." The reply of Jesus, according to tradition was as follows:

"Blessed are thou who hast believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe me and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written me, that I should come to thee, it is necessary for me to fulfil all things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him that sent me. But after I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease and give life to thee and thine."—Eusebius.

LESSON 5.

A CHRISTIAN WIFE AND A HEATHEN HUSBAND.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To teach the old story: the duty of going against the crowd, for the sake of our moral ideals.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

Science tells us that the pressure of the atmosphere on our bodies is 217 pounds to every square inch. Nevertheless, in our growth from babyhood we have lifted that enormous weight. We are accustomed to it, and we do not notice it. Suppose, however, that this pressure should be doubled: we notice it then quickly enough. Workmen in mines, and especially in tunnels under water, often have to spend hours each day in caissons where the air pressure is terrific. Sometimes this brings on a peculiar and very painful disease "the bends." Now we all live in a spiritual as well as in a physical atmosphere; we are constantly under the pressure of influences, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil. As we go back

in imagination to the life of the early Christians, we seem to enter a caisson, where the pressure of an evil atmosphere becomes terrific. (Proceed with the story of Lucia.)

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Bring out the fact that the Christians universally believed the heathen gods to be not mere delusions, but evil demons. Life to them was one long contest with these evil powers. (See 1 Cor. 10:20-21.) Believing this they could not but shrink in horror from every practice which savored in the slightest degree of idolatry. What is the safest attitude toward practices which seem to us on the borderland, "the twilight zone" between right and wrong?

2. Bring out that Lucia came into conflict with her husband through her refusal to attend drunken feasts; also through her democratic friendliness toward Christians of the lower classes.

3. What practical questions did Lucia have to ask herself, before she finally went out from her husband's roof? How was she to live? Possibly, indeed, she had property of her own. Otherwise she would have to earn her own support. What chances were there for a woman to earn money? Certainly very few as compared with those of our time. Did Lucia foresee that her husband might accuse her to the officials, as being a Christian? Certainly that was a danger which the Christians constantly faced. Any man with a grudge against a Christian could satisfy his hatred to the uttermost by simply signing his name to an official document of this character.

4. We have already discussed the problem of bad companions, in the preceding lesson. This story of Lucia throws a flood of light upon it. If she had stayed with her husband what would probably have been the result? Imagine a swimmer rescuing drowning persons from a shipwreck. He grapples with one and tries to draw him ashore, but finds that his senseless struggles are causing them both to sink. Should he cling to this man, or break away?

Information for the Teacher.

The High Moral Ideals of the Christians. Concerning chastity, He uttered such sentiments as these: "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart before God." And, "If thy right

eye offend thee, cut it out; for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire." And, "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband, committeth adultery." And "There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but all cannot receive this saying." So that all who by human law are twice married are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her. For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God. And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years; and I boast that I could produce such from every race of men. For what shall I say, too, of the countless multitude of those who have reformed intemperate habits, and learned these things? For Christ called not the just nor the chaste to repentance, but the ungodly, and the licentious, and the unjust; His words being, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

And concerning our being patient of injuries, and ready to serve all, and free from anger, this is what He said: "To him that smiteth thee on one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak or coat, forbid not. And whosoever shall be angry, is in danger of the fire. And every one that compelleth thee to go with him a mile, follow him two. And let your good works shine before men, that they, seeing them, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven." For we ought not to strive; neither has He desired us to be imitators of wicked men, but He has exhorted us to lead all men, by patience and gentleness, from shame and the love of evil. And this indeed is proved in the case of many who once were of your way of thinking, but have changed their violent and tyrannical disposition, being overcome either by the constancy which they have witnessed in their neighbour's lives, or by the extraordinary forbearance they have observed in their fellow travelers when defrauded, or by the honesty of those with whom they have transacted business.—Justin: In the *Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

Christians in the World, but not of it. But we are called to

account as harm doers on another ground, and are accused of being useless in the affairs of life. How in all the world can that be the case with people who are living among you, eating the same food, wearing the same attire, having the same habits, under the same necessities of existence? We are not Indian Brahmins or Gymnosophs, who dwell in woods and exile themselves from ordinary human life. We do not forget the debt of gratitude we owe to God, our Lord and Creator; we reject no creature of His hands, though certainly we exercise restraint upon ourselves, lest of any gift of His we make an immoderate or sinful use. So we sojourn with you in the world, abjuring neither forum, nor shambles, nor bath, nor booth, nor workshop, nor inn nor weekly market, nor any other places of commerce. We sail with you, and fight with you, and till the ground with you; and in like manner we unite with you in your traffickings . . . even in the various arts we make public property of our works for your benefit. How it is we seem useless in your ordinary business, living with you and by you as we do, I am not able to understand.

I will confess, however, without hesitation, that there are some who in a sense may complain of Christians that they are a sterile race; as, for instance, pimps, and panders, and bath-suppliers; assassins, and poisoners, and sorcerers; soothsayers, too, diviners, and astrologers. But it is a noble fruit of Christians that they have not fruits for such as these. And yet, whatever loss your interests suffer from the religion we profess, the protection you have from us makes amply up for it. What value do you set on persons, I do not here urge who deliver you from demons, I do not urge who for your sakes present prayers before the throne of the true God, for perhaps you have no belief in that—but from whom you can have nothing to fear?—Tertullian: *Apology, Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

The Duty of Avoiding Employment Connected with Idolatry. There are also other species of very many arts which although they extend not to the making of idols, yet, with the same criminality, furnish the adjuncts without which idols have no power. For it matters not whether you erect or equip, if you have embellished his temple, altar, or niche; if you have pressed out gold-leaf, or have wrought his insignia, or even his house; work of that kind, which confers not shape, but authority, is more important. If the necessity of maintenance is urged so much, the arts have other species withal to afford means of

livelihood, without outstepping the path of discipline. The plasterer knows both how to mend roofs, and lay on stuccoes, and polish a cistern and trace ogives, and draw in relief on party walls many other ornaments beside likenesses. The painter, too, the marble mason, the bronze worker, and every graver whatever, know expansions of his own art, of course much easier of execution. For how much more easily does he who delineates a statue overlay a sideboard. How much sooner does he who carves a Mars out of a lime tree, fasten together a chest! No art but is either mother or kinswoman of some neighbour art; nothing is independent of its neighbour. The veins of the arts are many as are the concupiscences of men. "But there is difference in wages and the rewards of handicraft." Therefore there is difference, too, in the labour required. Smaller wages are compensated by more frequent earning. How many are the party walls which require statues? How many the temples and shrines which are built for idols? But houses, and official residences, and baths, and tenements, how many are they? Shoe and slipper gilding is daily work; not so the gilding of Mercury and Serapis. —Tertullian: *Apology.*

The Difficulties of a Christian Wife with a Heathen Husband. But let her see to (the question) how she discharges her duties to her husband. To the Lord, at all events, she is unable to give satisfaction according to the requirements of discipline; having at her side a servant of the devil, his lord's agent for hindering the pursuits and duties of believers; so that if a station is to be kept, the husband at daybreak makes an appointment with his wife to meet him at the baths; if there are fasts to be observed, the husband that same day holds a convivial banquet; if a charitable expedition has to be made, never is family business more urgent. For who would suffer his wife, for the sake of visiting the brethren, to go round from street to street to other men's and indeed to all the poorer, cottages? Who will willingly bear her being taken from his side by nocturnal convocations, if need so be? Who, finally, will without anxiety endure her absence all the night long at the paschal solemnities? Who will, without some suspicion of his own, dismiss her to attend that Lord's Supper which they defame? Who will suffer her to creep into prison to kiss a martyr's bonds? nay, truly to meet any one of the brethren to exchange the kiss? to offer water for the saints' feet? to snatch (somewhat for

them) from her food, from her cup? to yearn (after them)? to have (them) in her mind? If a pilgrim brother arrive, what hospitality for him in an alien home? If bounty is to be distributed to any, the granaries, the storehouses are foreclosed.

The handmaid of God dwells amid alien labours; and among these (labours) on all the memorial days of demons, at all solemnities of kings, at the beginning of the year, at the beginning of the month, she will be agitated by the odour of incense and she will have to go forth (from her house) by a gate wreathed with laurel, and hung with lanterns, as from some new consistory of public lusts; she will have to sit with her husband ofttimes in club meetings, ofttimes in taverns; and, wont as she was formerly to minister to the "saints" will sometimes have to minister to the "unjust." And will she not recognize a prejudgment of her own damnation, in that she tends them whom (formerly) she was expecting to judge? whose hand will she yearn after? of whose cup will she partake? What will her husband sing to her, or she to her husband? From the tavern, I suppose, she who sups upon God, will hear somewhat! From hell what mention of God (arises)? what invocation of Christ? Where are the fosterings of faith by the interspersions of the Scriptures (in conversation)? Where the Spirit? Where refreshment? where the divine benediction? All things are strange, all inimical, all condemned, aimed by the evil one for the attrition of salvation.—Tertullian: *Letter to his Wife.*

The Prejudice against Christians. The situation of the Christians, surrounded as they were by heathenism, is well portrayed in the following passage from the Last Days of Pompeii.* Imagine a Christian named Olinthus going down the main street of the city, past the doors of a heathen temple. Many persons enter, but the Christian passes on with a look of scorn on his face.

"Who is yon cynic?" asked a merchant of his companion, a jeweler.

"It is Olinthus," replied the jeweler, "a reputed Nazarene."

The merchant shuddered. "A dread sect!" said he, in a whispered and fearful voice. "It is said that when they meet at nights, they always commence their ceremonies by the murder of a new-born babe; they profess a community of goods too, the wretches! A community of goods! What would

*Quoted by permission of Little, Brown, & Company.

become of merchants, or jewelers either, if such notions were in fashion!"

"That is very true," said the jeweler; "besides they wear no jewels—they mutter imprecations whenever they see a serpent, and in this city all our ornaments are serpentine."

"Do but observe" said a third man, who was a worker in bronze, "how yon Nazarene scowls at the piety of the sacrificial procession. He is murmuring curses on the temple, be sure. Do you know, Celcinus, that this fellow, passing by my shop the other day, and seeing me at work on a statue of Minerva, told me with a frown that had it been marble he would have broken it, but the bronze was too strong for him! 'Break a goddess!' said I. 'A goddess,' answered the atheist. It is a demon . . . an evil spirit.' Then he passed on his way cursing. Are such things to be borne?"

(Some days later, a murder was committed in the sacred grove of the goddess Cybele. Olinthus was present in the crowd that gathered, and is questioned regarding the circumstances by a Roman soldier, who asks him to swear by Cybele that he is telling the truth. Olinthus refused.)

"If, O Nazarene, thou disbelievest in Cybele, which of our gods dost thou own?" returned the soldier, unmoved by the cries around him.

"None."

"Hark to him! Hark!" cried the crowd.

"O vain and blind!" continued the Christian, raising his voice, "can you believe in images of wood and stone? Is yon mute thing carved by man's art a goddess?—hath it made mankind? Lo! convince yourselves of its nothingness, of your folly."

And as he spoke, he strode across to the altar and ere any of the bystanders were aware of his purpose, he, in his compassion or his zeal, struck the statue of wood from its pedestal.

"See," cried he, "your goddess cannot avenge herself. Is this a thing to worship?"

Further words were denied to him; so gross and daring a sacrilege filled even the most lukewarm with rage and horror. With one accord the crowd rushed upon him, and but for the interference of the centurion, they would have torn him to pieces. "Peace!" said the soldier authoritatively. "Let us refer this insolent blasphemer to the proper tribunal."

A girl darted from the crowd and gazed hard on the face of

Olinthus. "By Jupiter, a stout knave! I say, we shall have a man for the tiger now; one for each beast."

"Ho!" shouted the mob, "a man for the lion, and another for the tiger! What luck!"

LESSON 6.

HOW EVEN THE WEAK WERE STRONG ENOUGH TO DIE FOR CHRIST. PERPETUA OF CARTHAGE.

Purpose of the Lesson.

This lesson should bring home to the pupils the beauty and value of courageous testimony for Christ, in our time as well as in the first century. It should be especially helpful to boys and girls who find no sympathy in their homes for their newly awakened religious ideals.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

Almost every week we read in the papers about boys or girls, who have saved trains from being wrecked, or who have performed other kinds of heroic deeds. How often the thought comes to us, that we ourselves would like the opportunity for some such heroism. Our next lesson is about a young woman, hardly more than a girl, who served the Master, gloriously and well, just by declaring herself a Christian.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Most of the class will probably agree that the actual moment of death was not the hardest part of Perpetua's experience. Some perhaps will suggest the scourging of her father. What was the next hardest part? Was it the time when her babe was taken away for the last time?

2. What was the effect of Perpetua's heroism on the charity of the Christians, on their brotherly spirit toward all who were unfortunate? What was the effect on their worship? Imagine yourself attending their first meeting after Perpetua's death. Was it poorly attended? Were there any signs of discouragement? Were they listless and sleepy in their hymns and prayers?

3. Call attention to Tertullian's famous sentence, "The blood of the Christians is the seed of the Church." Were all the heathen spectators who witnessed Perpetua's death affected in the same way? Some, no doubt, were made the more cruel and heartless. In addition, however, to those non-Christians who were directly influenced by Perpetua, there were doubtless others who were won to the new faith by the increased zeal of the Christians.

4. This question will be answered differently in Sunday schools of different churches. Of course confirmation and church membership constitute a testimony for Christ. Some teachers may bring up the matter of taking part in the meetings of the Young People's Society. What good does such testimony do? Bring out that even a single boy or girl may bring new hope and courage to a whole church by standing up bravely, and letting himself be counted as a Christian.

Information for the Teacher.

Selections from the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas. The young catechumens, Revocatus and his fellow-servant Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, were apprehended. And among them also was Vivia Perpetua, respectably born, liberally educated, a married matron, having a father and mother and two brothers, one of whom, like herself, was a catechumen, and a son an infant at the breast. She herself was about twenty-two years of age. From this point onward she shall herself narrate the whole course of her martyrdom, as she left it described by her own hand and with her own mind.

"After a few days we are taken into the dungeon, and I was very much afraid because I had never felt such darkness. Oh, terrible day! Oh, the fierce heat of the shock of the soldiery, because of the crowds! I was very unusually distressed by my anxiety for my infant. There were present there Tertius and Pomponius the blessed deacons who ministered to us, and had arranged by means of a gratuity that we might be refreshed by being sent out for a few hours into a pleasanter part of the prison. I suckled my child, which was now enfeebled with hunger. In my anxiety for it, I addressed my mother and comforted my brother, and commended to their care, my son. I was languishing because I had seen them languishing on my account. Such solicitude I suffered for many days, and I obtained leave for my infant to remain in the dungeon

with me, and forthwith I grew strong and was relieved from distress and anxiety about my infant, and the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so that I preferred being there to being elsewhere.

"After a few days, there prevailed a report that we should be heard. And then my father came to me from the city, worn out with anxiety. He came to me that he might cast me down, saying, 'Have pity, my daughter, on my grey hairs. Have pity on your father, if I am worthy to be called a father by you. If with these hands, I have brought you up to this flower of your age, if I have preferred you to all your brothers, do not deliver me up to the scorn of men. Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your aunt, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you. Lay aside your courage, and do not bring us all to destruction; for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything.' These things said my father in his affection, kissing my hands, and throwing himself at my feet; and with tears he called me not Daughter, but Lady. And I grieved over the grey hairs of my father, that he alone of all my family would not rejoice over my passion. And I comforted him saying, 'On that scaffold whatever God wills shall happen. For know that we are not placed in our own power, but in that of God.' And he departed from me in sorrow.

"Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly taken away to be heard and we arrived at the town hall. At once the rumour spread through the neighbourhood of the public place and an immense number of people were gathered together. We mount the platform. The rest were interrogated and confessed. Then they came to me, and my father immediately appeared with my boy, and withdrew me from the step, and said in a supplicating tone, 'Have pity on your babe.' And Hilarianus, the procurator, who had just received the power of life and death in the place of the proconsul Minucius Timinianus, who was deceased, said, 'Spare the grey hairs of your father, spare the infancy of your boy, offer sacrifice for the well-being of the emperors.' And I replied, 'I will not do so.' Hilarianus said, 'Are you a Christian?' And I replied, 'I am a Christian.' And as my father stood there to cast me down from the faith, he was ordered by Hilarianus to be thrown down and was beaten with rods. And my father's misfortune grieved me as if I myself had been beaten, I so grieved for his

wretched old age. The procurator then delivers judgment on all of us, and condemns us to the wild beasts, and we went down cheerfully to the dungeon. Then because my child had been used to receive suck from me and to stay with me in the prison, I send Pomponius the deacon to my father to ask for the infant, but my father would not give it him."

The day of their victory shone forth, and they proceeded from the prison into the amphitheatre, as if to an assembly, joyous and of brilliant countenances; if perchance shrinking it was with joy, and not with fear. Perpetua followed with placid look, and with step and gait as a matron of Christ, beloved of God; casting down the luster of her eyes from the gaze of all.

Moreover, for the young women the devil prepared a very fierce cow, provided especially for that purpose contrary to custom, rivaling their sex also in that of the beasts. And, so, stripped and clothed with nets, they were led forth. Perpetua is first led in. She was tossed and fell on her loins; and when she saw her tunic torn from her side, she drew it over her as a veil. So she rose up; and when she saw Felicitas crushed, she approached and gave her her hand, and lifted her up. And both of them stood together; and the brutality of the populace being appeased, they were recalled to the Sanavivarian gate. Then Perpetua was received by a certain one who was still a catechumen, Rusticus by name, who kept close to her; and she, as if aroused from sleep, so deeply had she been in the Spirit and in an ecstacy, began to look around her, and to say to the amazement of all, "I cannot tell when we are to be led out to that cow." And when she had heard what had already happened, she did not believe it until she had perceived certain signs of injury in her body and in her dress, and had recognized the catechumen. And afterwards causing that catechumen and the brother to approach, she addressed them saying, "Stand fast, in the faith, and love one another, all of you and be not offended at my sufferings."

The same Saturus at the other entrance exhorted the soldier Pudens, saying, "Assuredly here I am, as I have promised and foretold, for up to this moment I have felt no beast. And now believe with your whole heart. Lo, I am going forth to that beast, and I shall be destroyed with one bite of the leopard." And immediately at the conclusion of the exhibition he was thrown to the leopard; and with one bite of his he was

bathed with such a quantity of blood, that the people shouted out to him as he was returning, the testimony of his second baptism, "Saved and washed, saved and washed." Manifestly he was assuredly saved who had been glorified in such a spectacle.

And when the populace called for them into the midst, that as the sword penetrated into their body they might make their eyes partners in the murder, they rose up of their own accord, and transferred themselves whither the people wished, but they first kissed one another, that they might consummate their martyrdom with the kiss of peace. The rest indeed, immovable and in silence, received the sword-thrust; much more Saturus, who had first ascended the ladder, and first gave up his spirit, for he also was waiting for Perpetua. But Perpetua, that she might taste some pain, being pierced between the ribs, cried out loudly, and she herself placed the wavering right hand of the youthful gladiator to her throat. Possibly such a woman could not have been slain unless she herself had willed it, because she was feared by the impure spirit.—*Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

Christian Boys and Girls who have to Struggle Against Indifference or Hostility at Home. There is another girl with longings, aspirations, and dreams who sits in many a Sunday school class of girls in their teens and feels that no one understands. The teacher, who was born in a Christian home, was led by her own parents, to the great decision and heard their prayers of rejoicing when she came into the church, finds it hard to understand this girl. The teacher cannot know what it means to try all through a week of sordidness to live up to the ideals one sees and loves on Sunday. I am thinking of such a girl now. She is not a working girl, but is in a high school, is a good student, and is hoping some day to teach. She was brought to the Sunday school when ten years old, and has been constant in attendance since. Her home is poor because her father, a mechanic, is at times a hard drinker. Her mother, an honest, clean, hard-working woman, is nervous and fretful, worn out by the hard things she has had to meet. It is a quarrelsome household, and when the father comes home intoxicated, the law often has to interfere. One of the boys has been sent home from socials at the church, several times, because his language was so dreadful. Amid this environment the girl lives. She gets most of her lessons at school, and at

the library. Her mother constantly urges her to give up school and go to work, but an uncle who furnishes her meager supply of clothing objects so strongly that school continues. On Saturdays she works hard doing housework for twenty-five cents.

From a week of this sort of life she comes to the hour on Sunday. The school and the Sunday school have furnished all her ideals. But she has ideals, and one who sees her amid her daily surroundings would be surprised at what she dreams to do some day. But now the ideals are hard to realize. She listens to all the teacher says, asks questions, knows her lesson. She longs to come into the church, but dares not mention it, for each Sunday her father taunts her with being a "saint," and it hurts. The hour on Sunday helps. She meets her school friends on Monday, does well in her lessons; she is sixteen and hope is high, but Wednesday there is another dreadful quarrel at home, bitter words, and her father's threats. When late at night all is quiet, and she creeps into bed beside her little sister, she remembers Sunday and the lesson, the teacher, and what she said one must do and be, and then covers her eyes to keep back the tears. "Oh, it is so hard, and no one understands!"—Margaret Slattery, in the *Pilgrim Teacher.*

Confessing the Religious Life. Many of our difficulties both in understanding a child's religion and in fostering the man's faith would be solved if we would grasp the fact that the form of expression of the religious life will always be consonant with the stage of the person's development.

We are apt to expect from the child the adult's religious philosophy, we expect the child to be content with intellectual expressions of faith and love while at the same time we often urge on the adult infantile sentiments and expect from him the attitude that belongs to the child. If in either case these persons try to meet our expectations their words and actions can only issue in hypocrisy; they are offering that which is not their own, that which is only assumed for the sake of giving us pleasure or in order to conform to formal requirements. The child who puts on a man's religion is likely to put off all religion when he becomes a man.

The boy will express his religion in his boy life. Normally he will not enter the realm of philosophy; he will not be troubled with subtle doubts and strange speculations. The great interests of his life, his friends, sports and hopes of duties and

work, will be lifted up by his religious interpretation of them all. If, as a boy, he is in the gang stage of development his religion will find normal expression through that gregarious instinct; he will be loyal to the group; he will hope and endeavor to lead the group to ideal pursuits; he will think of the group more and more as existing for ideal ends. Friendship, the idealization of the person in the group, will be transfigured by his faith. To him Jesus will be conceived in terms of friendship. He will stand out as the man who gathered men to Him, the striking scenes will be those in which He is found with His friends, opening His heart to them. To the boy there will come the consciousness of the great unseen Friend as with him ever.

To attempt to force the expression of his religion into the terms of mature life will be to stop its development. He, the boy, is not yet given to introspection; he does not enjoy autoanalysis; soul-dissection is not his pleasure; he does not normally crave the opportunity to discuss his pious pains with fellow spiritual hypochondriacs. Whenever the prayer meeting, with its formalized testimonies, becomes a public clinic on private spiritual ills, the boy's aversion thereto is not due to natural depravity but to normal good sense. To persuade him to testify on his internal feelings is to do him a grave wrong. The last thing a boy would think of doing would be to uncover his soul. Usually he has few observable reserves on the subject of his own skill, endurance or prowess. He lives with other animals who growl much and boast a good deal. But the really high and holy places of his life are sacredly screened from the public gaze. Even a father makes a mistake who attempts to force an entrance there. One of the greatest surprises a father has will come when he accidentally falls on his big boy's sacred treasures, the little things that, having been associated with big moments of his life, are laid away in reverent secrecy; then the father learns what he so easily forgets, that this big boy is just the same kind of a boy as he was at that age.

Could we do a greater wrong to any one than to try to force this bashful lad who holds his sense of God and his religious hopes so sacred, who hides them from public gaze, than to demand their public exhibition, to persuade him to talk glibly about that life? How soon the fresh beauty would be brushed away by such a process, how readily a form of words would

take the place of reality in any such confessions! While discouraging any cowardly fear of ridicule it is worth while to remember this trait in the boy whenever we look for confession of faith in any form. He should not be ashamed to stand in the ranks where he belongs but he will not, normally, tell of the song that sings itself in his heart, of the high hopes that burn there.—Henry F. Cope, in the *Pilgrim Teacher.*

LESSON 7.

CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHO WERE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To kindle in the pupils the ambition to let their influence count on the side of right conduct; also to bring home the lesson, *noblesse oblige.* For example, an older brother or sister has a special responsibility for younger members of the family.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

Suppose you or I had been a powerful king in these times of which we are studying. How splendid it would have been to rush down upon the city of Carthage with an army, just before Perpetua was put to death, and rescue both Perpetua and all her fellow Christians from the cruel Romans! Perhaps the Christians would not have welcomed us. They were not seeking to escape from their persecutors, but were rather seeking to convert them to Christ. There were certain men among the Christians themselves, however, who defended their religion, and their fellow Christians, not with swords, however, but with reasons and arguments. Proceed with the story of Justin. Polycarp also may be classed as a defender of the Christians, although he did not write books.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. It is a significant fact that two of the leading officials of the city, Herod and Nicetes by name, made a special visit to Polycarp to induce him to make some concession to the proconsul. Why were they so anxious that he should do this?

Is it not evident that they realized that he was widely respected in the city, and that his martyrdom would react against the government officials?

2. Every one should commit to memory Polycarp's great words, "Eighty-six years have I served him," etc. What do these words reveal as to the dominating motive among the early Christians? Was not personal affection for Jesus a large element in it?

3 and 4. These two questions naturally belong together. One of the strongest of Justin's arguments, to an intelligent non-Christian, would doubtless be the similarity between Christian doctrines and those of the great philosophers, such as Socrates. At least this argument must have helped to win a respectful attention. The advantages of Justin's early education in enabling him to understand and appreciate Greek philosophy, are obvious.

5. It is manifest that Polycarp could easily have escaped. It is significant also that Justin was arrested along with a number of his own Christian pupils. Apparently the soldiers came upon them while Justin was instructing them, in his lodgings. At least these meetings had been spied upon. Why did not Justin suspend them, temporarily, when persecution was imminent? Is it possible that at just these times non-Christian inquirers were most numerous? Certainly, at just these times, the young Christian disciples were in special need of him. Illustrate with references to physicians who have remained at their posts in times of pestilence. Tell also the story of Peter returning to Rome, from "Quo Vadis." (See below.) What kind of an older brother would Justin have been?

Information for the Teacher.

Persecutions under Marcus Aurelius. During the first years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius the Christians' position remained the same as before. Trajan's regulations were still the standard for all proceedings against them, except that the many calamities which had come upon the empire had excited the fanaticism of the heathen to greater fierceness, and the authorities opposed less resistance to the demands of the people. A persecution flamed up with peculiar fury in Asia Minor, and in it Polycarp, the last of those who had been taught by the apostles, suffered martyrdom. The Proconsul had already yielded to the popular clamor so far as to execute a number of Christians by torture,

or by exposure to the wild beasts, or by burning at the stake, when the multitude assembled in the amphitheatre demanded in addition the death of Polycarp. "Away with the Atheists! Search for Polycarp!" with shouts like these they besieged the Proconsul. Polycarp had withdrawn to an estate near the city, and when he was sought there escaped to another; yet two slaves were captured, one of whom under torture betrayed the retreat of the bishop. When the soldiers sent to take him prisoner approached the villa, Polycarp was in the upper story, and might easily have fled from there to the roof of the next house. But when urged to do this he refused, and quietly went down to deliver himself up to the soldiers. He asked only a single hour for prayer. But he remained two hours in rapt devotion, so that even the heathen were moved by it.

Then the aged bishop was conveyed to the city on an ass. On the way he was met by the chief of the police, who took him up into his carriage, and said in a friendly manner: "What harm can there be in saying: 'The Emperor, our Lord!' and in sacrificing?" Polycarp at first was silent; but when they urged him, he quietly answered: "I shall not do as you advise." Then with abuse they thrust him so violently out of the carriage as to injure one of his legs. But he went onward cheerfully as if nothing had happened. In the circus the Proconsul was awaiting him, surrounded by an immense multitude of people who had flocked thither at the news that Polycarp was captured. The Proconsul at first reminded him of his great age, and urged him to regard it, and show his penitence by swearing by the genius of the Emperor, and joining in the cry: "Away with the Atheists!" The Bishop looked with a steadfast countenance on the tumultuous crowd, and pointing to them with his finger, raised his eyes to heaven, and said: "Away with the Atheists!" Then the Proconsul urged him further: "Swear, and I release thee, revile Christ!" Then Polycarp answered: "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has never done me a wrong; how can I blaspheme him, my King, who has saved me?" When the Proconsul yet again pressed him: "Swear by the genius of the Emperor!" Polycarp replied: "If thou cherishest the vain thought that I will swear by the genius of the Emperor, as thou sayest, and pretendest not to know who I am, hear it plainly: I am a Christian!" This was the decisive word, and the trial was properly at an end. Nevertheless the Pro-

consul still sought to save him, if he would only persuade the people to desist from their demands. But Polycarp refused: "To thee I owed an answer, for we are taught to pay due honor to the powers ordained of God, but those men I do not think the proper persons to hear my defence." In vain the Proconsul now threatened him with the wild beasts and the stake. Polycarp remained true to his confession, and so the Proconsul caused it to be proclaimed: "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian." Hardly had the herald made the proclamation, when the whole multitude cried out: "This is the teacher of impiety, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, who teaches so many not to sacrifice, nor to worship the gods." They rushed in a body to Philip, the Asiarch, who had charge of the public games, and demanded that he should let loose a lion upon Polycarp. When he refused, because the games were already finished, they clamored for him to be burned. With all speed they collected wood from the workshops and baths nearby, and made a pile. Polycarp was unwilling to be fastened to the stake. "Leave me thus," he said. "He who strengthens me to endure the fire will also enable me to stand firm at the stake without being fastened with nails." Then after he had prayed with a loud voice: "Lord God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I praise thee that thou has judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to participate in the number of Thy witnesses and in the cup of Thy Christ," he was consumed by the flames. This took place on the sixth of April, A. D. 166.

About the same time Justin sealed the testimony given in his Apology by his martyrdom. When he wrote the second Apology, he was already aware of what awaited him. He narrates the executions of several Christians, which had given the occasion for the Apology, and then adds: "I, too, expect to be taken in their snares, and impaled." He knew that the philosopher, Crescens, longed to be revenged upon him and had daily before his eyes proofs of how easy it was to procure the death of a Christian. Crescens denounced him, and with several other Christians he was brought before Junius Rusticus, the Prefect of the city. Justin quietly explained who he was, and what was his occupation, that he had himself sought and found the truth, and that now when any one came to him he communicated to him the teachings of the truth. "Art thou not then a Christian?" asked the Prefect, and Justin replied:

"Yes; I am a Christian." After the rest had made the same confession, the Prefect turned again to Justin, and asked mockingly: "Listen, thou who art called learned, and believest that thou knowest the true doctrines, art thou persuaded that when thou shalt have been scourged and beheaded, thou wilt then ascend into heaven?" "I hope," replied Justin, "to receive Christ's gracious gift, when I shall have endured all those things." "Thou really thinkest, then, that thou wilt ascend into heaven, and there receive a recompense?" asked the Prefect, yet more scornfully. "I not merely think so, but I know and am thoroughly convinced of it," answered Justin. This must have seemed perfect madness to the Prefect. He did not think it worth while to parley with such people. "To come to the point, advance together, and unite in sacrificing to the gods!" "No right-minded man will leave the worship of God for its opposite," was the answer. "If ye do not obey, ye must suffer punishment without mercy," threatened the Prefect, but the Christians responded with cheerful courage: "Do what you will, we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols." Then the Prefect pronounced the Sentence: "Since they are such as do not sacrifice to the gods, nor obey the command of the Emperor, let them be scourged and executed according to the laws." Giving praise to God, the martyrs went to the place of execution, where, after being scourged, they were beheaded with the axe.—Uhlhorn: *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism.*

Justin's Doctrine that Socrates was a Christian. But lest some should, without reason, and for the perversion of what we teach, maintain that we say that Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago under Cyrenius, and subsequently, in the time of Pontius Pilate, taught what we say He taught; and should cry out against us as though all men who were born before Him were irresponsible—let us anticipate and solve the difficulty. We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, and Ananias, and Azaras, and Misael, and Elias and many others whose actions and names we now decline to recount, because we know it would be tedious.

Our doctrines, then, appear to be greater than all human teaching; because Christ, who appeared for our sakes, became the whole rational being, both body, and reason, and soul. For whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated by finding and contemplating some part of the Word. But since they did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves. And those who by human birth were more ancient than Christ, when they attempted to consider and prove things by reason, were brought before the tribunals as impious persons and busy-bodies. And Socrates, who was more zealous in this direction than all of them, was accused of the very same crime as ourselves. For they said that he was introducing new divinities, and did not consider those to be gods whom the State recognized.—*Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

The Special Need of Leaders, when the Christians were Persecuted. This need is well brought out by the legend of Peter's return to Rome, as told in the following passage from "Quo Vadis."*

About dawn of the following day two dark figures were moving along the Appian Way toward the Campania.

One of them was Nazarius; the other the Apostle Peter, who was leaving Rome and his martyred coreligionists.

The sky in the east was assuming a light tinge of green, bordered gradually and more distinctly on the lower edge with saffron color. Silver-leafed trees, the white marble of villas, and the arches of aqueducts, stretching through the plain toward the city, were emerging from shade. The greenness of the sky was clearing gradually, and becoming permeated with gold. Then the east began to grow rosy and illuminate the Alban Hills, which seemed marvellously beautiful, lily-colored, as if formed of rays of light alone.

The light was reflected in trembling leaves of trees, in the dewdrops. The haze grew thinner, opening wider and wider views on the plain, on the houses dotting it, on the cemeteries, on the towns, and on groups of trees, among which stood white columns of temples.

Then the sun appeared over the line of hills; but at once a wonderful vision struck the apostle's eyes. It seemed to him that the golden circle, instead of rising in the sky, moved down

*From *Quo Vadis*, copyright 1896, 1897, by Jeremiah Curtin. Quoted by permission of Little, Brown, and Company.

from the heights and was advancing on the road. Peter stopped, and asked:

"Seest thou that brightness approaching us?"

"I see nothing," replied Nazarius.

But Peter shaded his eyes with his hand, and said after a while:

"Some figure is coming in the gleam of the sun."

But not the slightest sound of steps reached their ears. It was perfectly still all around. Nazarius saw only that the trees were quivering in the distance, as if some one were shaking them, and the light was spreading more broadly over the plain. He looked with wonder at the apostle.

"Rabbi! What ails thee?" cried he, with alarm.

The pilgrim's staff fell from Peter's hands to the earth; his eyes were looking forward, motionless; his mouth was open; on his face were depicted astonishment, delight, rapture.

Then he threw himself on his knees, his arms stretched forward; and this cry left his lips,

"O Christ! O Christ!"

He fell with his face to the earth, as if kissing some one's feet.

The silence continued long; then were heard the words of the aged man, broken by sobs,

"Quo vadis, Domine?"

Nazarius did not hear the answer; but to Peter's ears came a sad and sweet voice, which said,

"If thou desert my people, I am going to Rome to be crucified a second time."

The apostle lay on the ground, his face in the dust without motion or speech. It seemed to Nazarius that he had fainted or was dead; but he rose at last, seized the staff with trembling hands, and turned without a word toward the seven hills of the city.

The boy, seeing this repeated as an echo,

"Quo vadis, Domine?"

"To Rome," said the apostle, in a low voice.

And he returned.

Paul, John, Linus, and all the faithful received him with amazement; and the alarm was the greater, since at daybreak, just after his departure, pretorians had surrounded Miriam's house and searched it for the apostle. But to every question he answered only with delight and peace,

"I have seen the Lord!"

And that same evening he went to the Ostian cemetery to teach and baptize those who wished to bathe in the water of life.

And thenceforward he went there daily, and after him went increasing numbers. It seemed that out of every tear of a martyr new confessors were born, and that every groan on the arena found an echo in thousands of breasts. Cæsar was swimming in blood, Rome and the whole pagan world was mad. But those who had had enough of transgression and madness, those who were trampled upon, those whose lives were misery and oppression, all the weighed down, all the sad, all the unfortunate, came to hear the wonderful tidings of God, who out of love for men had given Himself to be crucified and redeem their sins.

LESSON 8.

A ROMAN EMPEROR WHO BECAME A CHRISTIAN.

Purpose of the Lesson.

In considering the question of joining the church, boys and girls usually have to face two opposite temptations: first, the temptation not to take this step, for fear of the ridicule of their mates, and second, the temptation to take the step merely to please their parents or teachers, without any serious purpose of their own. This lesson should help them to avoid the second temptation.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

There was once a tiny oak sapling, which had sprouted in one of the lower crevices of a low stone wall on the edge of a garden. Somehow it managed to send its roots down into fertile soil, underneath the wall, and its slender stem had found its way between the stones, to light and air above. It was a curious sight. "Rather cramped quarters for an oak tree," thought the owner of the garden. "I wonder which will win the victory, the stone wall or the tree." If you could visit that garden to-day, you would soon see which finally conquered. There is a fine sturdy tree growing there, and on all sides of it are the fragments of the wall, which it has pushed

aside with irresistible force. When the gospel of Christ was planted in the Roman empire, its position was almost as unfavorable as that little sapling in the crevice. Which will conquer, Christianity, or Roman paganism? We have seen that the old paganism was not at all successful in stamping out Christianity. But what will Christianity do to paganism? That question is answered in our lesson on the Emperor Constantine.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Perhaps the most effective argument on the negative side of this question is the fact that Constantine's conversion occurred at so convenient a time, that is, just before the battle of Milvian Bridge. If Constantine was really a sincere Christian, it is certainly a fact that his Christianity helped to win for him the throne. In favor of Constantine, of course, are the numerous humane laws which he enacted.

2 and 3 belong naturally together. Call attention to the statements in paragraph 4, regarding the increasing worldliness, and the lack of self-denial, among the Christians after the time of Constantine. Does not this in large part explain the sudden growth of monasticism? And is not self-denial the noblest element in the monastic ideal, and the monastic life? See quotation from Rainy, below.

4. Go on to discuss the shortcomings of monasticism. What is a better kind of self-denial, than that exemplified, for example, in St. Simeon Stylites. (See quotation below.) In what way is our problem to-day similar to that of the more earnest Christians in the century after Constantine? Does the Christian name involve any risk or self-denial? But how about genuine fidelity to the Christian ideal?

5. The quotation from Salvian should come as a climax to this discussion, and deserves to be committed to memory.

Information for the Teacher.

The Reign of Diocletian. The accession of Diocletian marks an important era in the history of the Roman empire. The two matters of chief importance connected with his reign are the changes he effected in the government and his persecution of the Christians.

Diocletian's government reforms, though radical, were salutary, and infused such fresh vitality into the frame of the

dying state as to give it a new lease of life for another term of nearly two hundred years.

The century of anarchy which preceded the accession of Diocletian, and the death by assassination during this period of ten of the twenty-five wearers of the imperial purple, had made manifest the need of a system which would discourage assassination and provide a regular mode of succession to the throne. Diocletian devised a system, the aim of which was to compass both these ends. First, he chose as a colleague a companion ruler, Maximian, who, like himself, bore the title of Augustus. Then each of the coemperors associated with himself an assistant, who took the title of Cæsar and was considered the son and heir of the emperor. There were thus two Augusti and two Cæsars. Milan, in Italy, became the capital and residence of Maximian, while Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, became the seat of the court of Diocletian. The Augusti took charge of the countries near their respective capitals, while the younger and more active Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius, were assigned the government of the more distant and turbulent provinces. The vigorous adminstration of the government in every quarter of the empire was thus secured.

A most serious drawback to this system was the heavy expense involved in the maintenance of four courts with their endless retinues of officers and dependents. It was complained that the number of those who received the revenues of the state was greater than that of those who contributed to them. The burden of taxation grew unendurable. The magistrates of the cities and towns were made responsible for the payment of the taxes due the government from their respective communities, and hence officeholding became not an honor to be coveted, but a burden to be evaded. It was this vicious system of taxation which more than any other one cause, after slavery, contributed to the depopulation, impoverishment, and final downfall of the empire.—Myers: *General History.*

Christianity between 180 and 313 A.D. During the whole period, Christianity, as far as the law was concerned, existed on sufferance: but yet the religion and its leaders were very well known to the authorities, and the sect continued not merely to exist but to own property, and to deal with the authorities from time to time about its temporal interests. The Christians availed themselves of laws which sanctioned

collegia tenuiorum—societies for charitable and co-operative purposes, which could hold property, acquire burial grounds, and so forth; and the authorities might not choose to see that under these forms they were dealing with Christians. But even apart from that artifice, it is to be remembered that a Christian was reckoned a bad subject because he refused to sacrifice; and as long as a magistrate chose to assume that the Christians known to him might be good subjects, who would sacrifice if called upon, he might not incur much responsibility by raising no questions. That would not apply to time when laws were in force like those of Decius and Valerian; but in ordinary times it was possible. Christianity, in fact, was steadily becoming more and more conspicuous, and its place in the community was notorious. Hence from time to time it is frankly taken notice of. Alexander Severus adjudged to the Christians a site beyond the Tiber, the title to which was disputed; Gallienus wrote to the Egyptian bishops that their cemeteries and meeting places should be restored to them, and that they should not be disturbed. Aurelian was actually asked to interpose in the question between the orthodox and Paul of Samosata, and he professed to decide it according to the opinion of the Roman bishop. Church buildings certainly existed *eo nomine* in the time of Diocletian, and probably a good deal earlier.

In such circumstances, and after forty years' immunity from serious disturbance, the Christians must have imagined that they had virtually established their "right to be" ("*Christianos esse passus est*"); but in the year 303 Diocletian, persuaded by his colleague Galerius, began to set in motion the last great persecution. For some years previously steps had been taken which indicated a determination to discourage Christianity. The actual persecution continued for eight years. It did not affect the whole empire with equal severity. Probably Asia Minor, Palestine, and Egypt suffered most—Italy and the central provinces not quite so continuously—Spain, Gaul, and Britain under Constantius Chlorus were comparatively spared. This Cæsar demolished churches, *verum autem templum quod est in hominibus incolume servavit* (*Lact. de Morte, 15*). Constantine succeeded his father in the west in 306. In 311 Galerius, in his last illness, issued an edict owning the failure of his efforts, and announcing the termination of the persecution. After a little it was renewed

in the Asiatic provinces by Maximinus. But in 313, Constantine and Licinius divided the whole empire between them; and in the same year they published at Milan a joint edict of universal toleration. Rainey; *The Ancient Catholic Church.*

A Hermit who Spent his Life upon a Pillar.

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
  Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs,
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
  O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Nor whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.
                O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.—Tennyson: *St. Simeon Stylites.*

Christianity in the Century after Constantine. When he decided that it was safe and wise to stand forth as the protector, and afterwards as the patron, of the Christian faith, he must have known very well that the Christians were a minority. But it might well be that a majority agreed with him in thinking the acceptance of Christianity as the coming religion to be no bad policy. Nothing vital existed that could be set against it. And from that day onwards no real popular rally for the old faiths was possible. Those, and they were very many indeed, who did not love Christianity, yet felt no call to interpose on behalf of paganism. When it became evident, then, that Christianity was to be the favored, and the only favored religion, many became willing to adopt it, and many more to let their children adopt it. It was the faith which had a future; and now the adoption of it was no longer to hinder a man's worldly prospects, but rather to help them.

Of course this indifference was not universal. Not a few continued to cherish regard for the old deities and the old rites. The preference might be aristocratic at Rome, philosophic at Athens, a popular passion in some towns and in many rural districts. For this paganism, here and there, a man might be found willing even to die. There is always some tragic fidelity to lost causes. The great sea of paganism did not empty itself into the Christian church at once; but a great stream of converts flowed in incessantly and for a long time. Gradually it came to be taken for granted, all but universally, that those who care to have some religion should have this one.

Various causes now rendered it creditable, expedient, customary for men to become Christians. The advantages of doing so were increased, certainly, by a variety of influences, governmental and other. But the radical fact was that the

ruler of the empire had adopted Christianity, did not conceal his preference for it, and (at best) left paganism to reveal all its weakness, without countenance or succor. After that, there could be no lack of reasons to induce careless, worldly, or unprincipled people to associate themselves with the winning side.

With such a flood of questionable disciples the standard of Christian feeling and of Christian life could not but tend downwards, and new difficulties were prepared for those who tried to raise it. Secularizing influence asserted itself everywhere.—Rainy: *The Ancient Catholic Church.*

The Significance of Monasticism. The significance and the power of the movement lay after all in this—it embodied an effort to give effect to one of the most fundamental truths of Christianity. Genuine Christianity includes the surrender to a new principle, the recognition of a new master, the response to a new motive and the acceptance of all sacrifices which so great a change implies. Life is to move to a new goal, and concentrate on one great attainment. "Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." "Take up the cross, and follow me." Up and down the churches we may be sure there were not a few Christians in whom this had begun, in whom it was going on. But the general aspect of things seemed rather to imply a consent of Christians that nothing so serious should be pressed. The old heroisms of the persecutions had ceased. The tide of easy-going converts swelled the churches. A man's Christianity passed unchallenged if, having once been baptized, perhaps in infancy, he maintained a negative goodness, joined with some attention to ordinances. The worst of it was, that the way of conceiving Christian principles which, it may be said, was universal, weakened in an extraordinary degree the power of challenging this nominal Christianity, even on the part of those who felt it to be dangerously defective. The decisive something had taken place at baptism, and after that it seemed the only question that could be raised was the question of a little more or a little less of Christian observance. Meanwhile this "Christianity," which was less and less distinguishable from indifference, lived on easy terms with the manners and the spirit of the decadent empire. Against it the spirit of Christianity itself revolted. Men who were awakened, even if they did not judge others, still refused to be content for themselves with so dubious a religion? And in

the spirit of their time, they demanded that the genuine Christianity should have a definite outward form, so that one could make sure of it. Asceticism was the answer to that demand. It has a deep meaning that the monastic life came to be spoken of as "religion," and the entrance on it as "conversion," and that Jerome could say that to become a monk was to have, as it were, a second baptism. The monastery was not to question the validity of the common Christianity which the church sanctioned; but the monk was resolved not to be content with it for himself.

The external form which was consecrated to hold this place was, after all, a human contrivance. And we may regard it as dangerously misleading. We may agree with Luther that the common callings of human life supply the proper opportunities and the proper discipline for a Christian. We may be persuaded that both by what it claimed for itself, and by what it implied as to the outside Christianity, this system wrought indefinite confusion in men's thoughts regarding Christian duty and attainment. But, whatever we may think to be the dangers or the errors of monasticism, we must not belittle the enthusiasm which flowed into the monasteries.—Rainy: *The Ancient Catholic Church.*

LESSON 9.

A GREAT EMPIRE CONQUERED BY BARBARIANS.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To inspire the boys and girls with admiration for Salvian as a champion of justice and fair dealing, especially toward immigrants.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

The other day a group of boys were tormenting an old Jewish push-cart man. They had stolen apples from his cart; and when he chased them, they threw stones at him. "He's only a sheeny," said one of the boys. Now if we had lived in the Roman empire, about the time of Constantine, we would have heard people talking about "immigrants" and "foreigners" just as among us. They called them "barbarians" and

made fun of them for their queer customs, and clothing and language. The Romans tried to keep them out of the country; but sometimes they would force their way across the frontier, just as the Indians used to make raids into the territory of the white settlers, in the early history of America. The Romans were all afraid, lest sometime these invaders would come in great numbers and conquer the whole empire. Our next lesson tells of the disaster which actually took place and how it might have been prevented. At this point, go on with the story of Ursus, Demas and Salvian.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Draw out a character sketch of Salvian, as a kind of Elijah, or Amos. Had he probably come in contact with that governor who lived in luxury and crushed the poor with high taxes? Remind the pupils of the story of Elijah, Ahab, and Naboth, as typical of Salvian's whole career.

2. Was Ursus ruining the country, or was he helping it? How about the corrupt governor? How about Demas and his friends? How were they hurting the country? (Breaking down patriotism; wasting material resources.)

3. In connection with this question tell something about Stilicho the great Roman general of this period of history. By birth he was a Vandal; but for years he fought loyally and brilliantly, under the standard of Rome. When Alaric first led his Goths against Rome, he was defeated by Stilicho. Shortly after the victory the weak Roman emperor Honorius became jealous of the man who had so nobly saved him and caused him to be put to death. A few months later, Alaric returned, and this time sacked Rome. This is an example of the folly which hastened the coming ruin. All over the empire were men like Stilicho, and the Ursus in our story, who might have saved the day, had the men in authority been wiser and more patriotic.

4 and 5. Draw out the truth of the old message of the Hebrew prophets: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Information for the Teacher.

A Brief Account of the Barbarian Invasions. There had been a gradual influx of barbarian immigrants into the Roman empire, since the days of Julius Cæsar. These had been quickly

Romanized for the most part, and entirely absorbed into the life of the nation. The first great break in the dykes occurred in the year 376 A.D. In this year a vast multitude of Goths asked permission to cross the Danube, and settle in Thrace. The Emperor, Valens, did not dare refuse their request. About 400 A.D. another horde of these same Goths, under their leader Alaric, devastated Greece, and then came west to Italy. In 410 A.D. they broke into the city of Rome, with Alaric at their head, and for six days and nights the streets were wet with blood, and the air full of smoke from burning buildings, while the rough barbarians stripped the houses of their treasures. Finally they moved on and became permanent settlers in Gaul and Spain. Some years later, an even more barbarous tribe, the Vandals, came down through Spain into Africa, burning, robbing and murdering everywhere. From Carthage they came in ships to Rome and once again the city was plundered. Finally in 451 A.D., worse than all others, there came down from Central Asia, the Huns, under the leadership of Attila, who was called the "Scourge of God." It was Attila's boast that the grass never grew again where the hoof of his horse had trod. It is said that he had with him seven hundred thousand warriors. When they encamped near Rome, the bishop of the church there, whose name was Leo, went boldly to their camp and succeeded in persuading Attila to spare the city. The empire, however, was fast falling to pieces. The last Roman emperor was a boy of six years, named Augustulus, "the little Augustus." After bearing the title for about a year, the poor little child-emperor was dethroned by a German clan, (476 A.D.) and no successor was appointed.

Salvian's Explanation of these Disasters. "By the encroachments and oppressions of the men of power, the weaker and meaner sort lose all that's theirs, and even their persons too, together with their goods. . . The world's turned topsy-turvy for the advancement of a few. One man's grandeur is the bane of the whole world.—For who can sufficiently set forth, as it ought to be, that vile robbery, that when the Roman empire was as good as dead, or at least breathing its last gasp, it should be strangled in the part in which it yet seemed to live, with cords of taxes, as much as by the hands of invaders; yet in this condition you will find very many of the poor who bear the taxes of the rich. . . . But this is the mischief, that many are robbed by a few, who make a prey of the public money,

so that what is supposed to be a debt to the treasury finds its way into private pockets. . . . Thus it comes that widows mourn, and orphans are trodden under foot, insomuch that many of them who are well born and educated fly over to the enemy, going to seek the Roman humanity among the barbarians because they cannot endure the barbarous inhumanity among the Romans. And although they may differ from those they fly to both in their religion, and in their language, and in their awkward clothing, yet they had rather bear with a different bodily habit among barbarians, than with raging injustice among the Romans."

"Not long since, I was urgently pressed by a certain poor man to speak to a rich neighbor of his, to ask him not to take away the poor creature's estate and goods, that he would not carry off the income that kept him alive on his low station; and when I went to this rich man, who had already, in his mind, devoured the poor man, and his goods, he looked sternly upon me, as upon one who was robbing *him* of that which he had not yet taken from the other. He could not, he declared, by any means grant my request. When I desired to know the reason, he gave me the most convincing and urgent one. 'I have,' said he, 'sworn by Christ to take all from him.' 'Pray, consider whether it be in my power to leave undone that which I have sworn by that holy name to do.' At this I walked off, having heard the reason of so religious a piece of villiany. What more could I say, when he had so just and holy a pretence?" (It will be noted that Salvian does not call the poor farmer an immigrant. This feature is added in the pupil's book as a possible inference from the vindictive attitude of the rich man. The supposition is at least in harmony with prevailing conditions at that time.)

Will Modern Civilization Perish? The language of Salvian, quoted above, has a strangely modern sound. All these forms of social injustice are present in modern civilization. Will history repeat itself? Or will Christianity, though it failed to preserve the Roman empire, nevertheless meet the challenge of the modern crisis, and save the world from recurrence of the Dark Ages? This question is discussed with remarkable insight and eloquence in two recent books by Walter Rauschenbusch: *Christianity and the Social Crisis, and Christianizing the Social Order.*

LESSON 10.

A CHRISTIAN MOTHER AND HER GREAT SON. MONICA AND AUGUSTINE.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To awaken reverence for the Christian ideal of motherhood, and to help each pupil to be more heartily loyal to his own mother, and his own home.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

One of the every day sights in our towns and cities is a group of boys playing ball in a vacant lot. Another common sight is a boy or a girl curled up in a chair, and deeply absorbed in a book of stories. If you had lived in the days of the Roman empire you could have seen almost the same sights; boys playing ball in vacant lots, or buried in volumes of stories. Our next lesson gives us a glimpse into this every day life of boys and girls in the Roman empire.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. Probably the boys of the Roman empire were as ingenious as modern boys in inventing epithets with which to ridicule a conscientious comrade. Did they perhaps ask Augustine if he were "tied to his mother's apron strings?"

2. It was undoubtedly through these boys that Augustine was informed that his mother's advice was not worthy of a young man's serious attention.

3. How many boys to-day wander astray into all sorts of follies, simply because "father's" influence is on the wrong side. Suppose there had been a brother, older than Augustine, whose influence had been on the side of Christianity, would the younger boy have been so likely to "sow his wild oats?"

4. Suppose Monica had come to Rome with her son, would he have indulged in evil practices as freely as he would have done alone? Why not? Was he afraid of his mother?

5. Bring out that Monica's influence was with Augustine every moment of his life, even when he was not thinking of her. Why was he so dissatisfied with his life as a teacher of rhetoric? Why did his conscience trouble him when he told lies. Why did the sermons of Ambrose stir him so deeply? Were not these things chiefly the effect of his early training under Monica?

6. What events and experiences did Augustine himself regard as providential? What was his explanation of the song of the children, "Take and read," and how did he explain the fact that when he opened the volume of Paul's letters, his eye fell just where it did. Were these events coincidences, or were they miraculous in character? Were they any more truly miraculous than the Christian character of Monica, and the longings in Augustine's own heart for a better life? Suppose that as he lay under the fig tree in the garden, he had not heard the voices of the children, would he have become a Christian? When any man becomes dead in earnest in his search after God, what is always the outcome?

Information for the Teacher.

Outline Sketch of Augustine's Life and Character. Aurelius Augustinus, born on the thirteenth of November, 354, at Tagaste, an unimportant village of the fertile province of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo Regius, inherited from his heathen father, Patricius, a passionate sensibility, from his Christian mother, Monica (one of the noblest women in the history of Christianity, of a highly intellectual and spiritual caste, of fervent piety, most tender affection, and all-conquering love), the deep yearning towards God so grandly expressed in his sentence: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in Thee." This yearning and his reverence for the sweet and holy name of Jesus, though crowded into the background, attended him in his studies at the schools of Madaura and Carthage, on his journeys toRome and Milan, and on his tedious wanderings through the labyrinth of carnal pleasures, and skepticism; till at last the prayers of his mother, the sermons of Ambrose, the biography of St. Anthony, and above all, the Epistles of Paul, as so many instruments in the hand of the Holy Spirit, wrought in the man of three and thirty years that wonderful change which made him an incalculable blessing to the whole Christian world, and brought even the sins and errors of his youth into the service of the truth.

A son of so many prayers and tears could not be lost, and the faithful mother, who travailed with him in spirit with greater pain than her body had in bringing him into the world, was permitted, for the encouragement of future mothers, to receive shortly before her death an answer to her prayers and expecta-

tions, and was able to leave this world with joy without revisiting her earthly home. For Monica died on a homeward journey, in Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, in her fifty-sixth year, in the arms of her son, after enjoying with him a glorious conversation that soared above the confines of space and time, and was a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath rest of the saints. If those moments, he says, could be prolonged forever, they would more than suffice for his happiness in heaven. She regretted not to die in a foreign land, because she was not far from God, who would raise her up at the last day. "Bury my body anywhere," was her last request, "and trouble not yourselves for it; only this one thing I ask, that you remember me at the altar of my God, wherever you may be." Augustine, in his confessions, has erected to Monica a noble monument that can never perish.

He received baptism from Ambrose in Milan on Easter Sunday, 387, in company with his friend and fellow-convert Alypius, and his natural son Adeodatus (given by God). It impressed the divine seal upon the inward transformation. He broke radically with the world; abandoned the brilliant and lucrative vocation of a teacher of rhetoric, which he had followed in Rome and Milan; sold his goods for the benefit of the poor; and thenceforth devoted his rare gifts exclusively to the service of Christ, and to that service he continued faithful to his latest breath. After the death of his mother, whom he revered and loved with the most tender affection, he went a second time to Rome for several months, and wrote books in defence of true Christianity against false philosophy and against the Manichæan heresy. Returning to Africa, he spent three years, with his friends Alypius and Evodius, on an estate in his native Tagaste, in contemplative and literary retirement.

Then, in 391, he was chosen presbyter against his will, by the voice of the people, which, as in the similar cases of Cyprian and Ambrose, proved to be the voice of God, in the Numidian maritime city of Hippo Regius (now Bona); and in 395 he was elected bishop in the same city. For eight and thirty years, until his death, he labored in this place, and made it the intellectual center of western Christendom.

Famous Sayings of Augustine. The New Testament is hidden in the Old, the Old Testament is revealed in the New.

To serve God is the true liberty.

Where love is, there is the Trinity.

He can be crushed by no misfortune, whom no good fortune can corrupt.

Faith takes precedence over the intellect.

Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.

Christianity and the Family. One of the marked results of the Gospel was the purification of the domestic relations. Under the Gospel there was "neither male nor female." Woman was exalted as being a partaker, on a footing of equality with man, in the communion with God and Christ. Marriage acquired a new sanctity. To the civil contract was added a religious service, in which the officers of the church were present. The bride and bridegroom sat down together at the Lord's Supper and presented an offering to the church. In the prayer connected with the communion service the divine blessing was invoked upon them. Marriage with a heathen was discountenanced, one main reason being that it would be impossible for the believer to perform without interference, the duties of the Christian life. Marriage with a heretic was, likewise, not allowable.—Fisher: *History of Christian Church.*

LESSON 11.

HOW OUR EUPROPEAN ANCESTORS WERE CONVERTED TO CHRIST.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To awaken interest in foreign missions.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

Where did your ancestors come from, William? (From England, perhaps.) And yours, Andrew? (From Scotland, of course.) How about yours, Louis, and yours, Otto? Well, now, suppose we could trace our genealogies centuries further back than any records we now possess, what kind of a great-great-great-great, and so forth, grandfather would we come upon? Did he go to a Christian church on Sunday, this forefather of yours, who hunted and fished in Germany, or Norway or England? No, he was not a Christian. In his way, though,

he was a religious man. He used to shudder with awe, as he made his way through dark forests, where sometimes the Druid priests offered up human sacrifices. It was not a very inspiring or wholesome religion, however, and our lesson tells how the blessings of Christianity were brought to our ancestors.

Another useful point of contact may be found in our names for the days of the week. How does it happen that we call a certain day Wednesday (Woden's day), and the next day Thursday (Thor's day), and the next, Friday (Freya's day)? Evidently our ancestors worshiped these gods, and named these special days of the week in their honor.

Discussing the Lesson.

1. If you have pupils of Scandinavian or Slavic descent, tell them of Ansgar, or of Cyril and Methodius. (See information for teachers, below).

2. The pupils will naturally think of the story of Winfred, or St. Boniface, cutting down the sacred tree. What might have been the effect of this act on the superstitious people who witnessed it? Aside from such spectacular deeds, as this, the whole life of such a man as Winfred was a career of intrepid courage. Were there good roads, over the hills? Were there bridges over the rivers? Had the wolves and bears been killed? Was the climate a mild one, in winter? Help the pupils to see with the imagination what kind of experiences these men went through in those wild northern lands.

3. What was the chief motive of Clovis in professing himself a Christian? What was probably the chief motive which led his three thousand warriors to be baptized with him?

4. Answer this question by showing that these missionaries with all their defects, must have exerted a deep and genuine Christian influence. Draw out all the evidences of real Christian earnestness and heroism, which are mentioned in the lesson. For example, the translation of the scriptures into the languages of the northern tribes. This was done not only by Ulfilas, but by many others. There is a copy of the New Testament in Gothic translated by Ulfilas, in the library of the University of Upsala. Cyril and Methodius invented the Slavonian alphabet, which is the basis of modern Russian, and translated the Bible into it. Draw out also something about the sermons of Winfred and his martyrdom.

In connection with (5) and (6), bring out the value to the

home land of foreign missions. Suppose that many other missionaries had followed the example of Ulfilas, and had carried Christianity and civilization not only to the Goths, but into every corner of Europe before the Barbarian invasions began. Would there have been any Dark Ages?

Information for the Teacher.

The Greatest Missionary to the Franks: St. Martin of Tours. An early missionary to the Gauls, who left the most permanent impress on the inhabitants of the land that we now know as France, was Martin, Bishop of Tours. (316-400). He did not introduce Christianity among the Franks, as many, including such noted men as Irenæus and Pothinus and Benignus, friends and disciples of Polycarp, had long before carried the Gospel to these savage tribes. But his character and work were such that he finally established Christianity over a wide area of Gaul where it had been but imperfectly known or received. He was a soldier under Constantine before he became a Christian, which no doubt accounts for the manner in which he waged war against heathenism, organizing his monks into a sort of army, not, however, to fight with men, but to cut down sacred trees, destroy idols and temples, and thus to remove the traces of paganism from those communities which his preaching and instruction had led to embrace Christianity. For centuries Martin of Tours has been the patron saint of France. St. Martin's day is noted in the Scottish civil calendar as "Martinmas," and in Germany and France it is observed as a feast day. In early days the tomb of St. Martin was a shrine, and his motto, "*Non recuso laborem*" ("I will not draw back from the work"), became a watchword for missionaries in all Western Europe.—Mason: *Outlines of Missionary History.*

Willibrord, Missionary to Holland. Willibrord was the missionary apostle of Holland. He was an Englishman by birth, but part of his education and much of his zeal were derived from the Irish church, under whose influence he came while still young. He sailed for Friesland and landed at the mouth of the Rhine in 690. The land was rough, the people wild, the work difficult, but regardless of obstacles, he labored on year after year, re-enforcing his little band of helpers by new recruits from home until he had firmly laid the foundations of Christianity among a people that were destined in after centuries to be perhaps the most devoted and bold defenders

of the Christian faith that have yet been known in the history of the church, for to Holland of the sixteenth century the whole world owes a spiritual and civic debt that cannot soon or easily be repaid.—Mason.

Christianity Carried to Scandinavia. While this work was going on in Central Europe, there were those who penetrated beyond the rivers and forests of France and Germany and Holland to the remoter regions of Denmark and Sweden and even to far-away Greenland. In Denmark and Sweden the pioneer missionary was Anskar (822). He was invited to Denmark by King Harold of Jutland, who, in a visit to Louis the Pious, the successor of Charlemagne, had been converted to Christianity. Returning with this king, he established a Christian school, whose advantages, however, were so little appreciated that he had to get his scholars from among slave boys, who were compelled to attend Anskar's instructions. Nevertheless, some progress was made until King Harold, by a revolt of his people, was forced to abdicate his throne, and the work of the missionaries was for the time brought to a close. But while the door was thus shut in Denmark, it was opened in Sweden, "where," as says Neander in his Church History, "some seeds of Christianity had already been scattered. Commerce had especially contributed to this event. Christian merchants had conveyed the knowledge of Christianity to Sweden, and merchants from Sweden, becoming acquainted with Christianity at Dorstede (or Dordrecht, in Holland, which in those days was the great entrepot of the northern trade) had many of them no doubt embraced the faith. Thus the way was opened for Anskar to minister to the Christians already in Denmark and through them to reach their savage and still heathen countrymen. He established his work at Hamburg, on the borders of Germany and Denmark, and in spite of reverses of and losses, succeeded in establishing Christianity in both these northern kingdoms."—Mason.

Cyril and Methodius in Bulgaria. During all this time of missionary activity on the part of the Western or Roman church, the Eastern church or that portion of Christendom which acknowledged the Patriarch of Constantinople as their head, was not moved to any great display of missionary zeal. Perhaps their most noted achievement was in the mission of two Greek priests from Thessalonica, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, by name. Their special work was among the

Bulgarians, and the story is that their savage king Bagoris was converted by seeing a picture of the Last Judgment, which Methodius, who was skilled in painting, had depicted upon the wall of the palace. The brother missionaries also did a work more lasting than the conversion of a barbaric king. "They found the Slavonic race without a written language and constructed for it an alphabet based on the Greek. Having made letters for the Slavs, they gave them a literature. They translated the whole Bible into Slavonian and created a liturgy in that tongue. As Max Muller says, 'This is still the authorized version of the Bible for the Slavonic race and to the student of the Slavonic languages it is what Gothic is to the student of German.'"—Mason.

A Story about Winfred. Upon the incident of Winfred and the sacred tree, Henry Van Dyke has based one of his charming stories in "The Blue Flower." According to Dr. Van Dyke's story, there was to have been a human sacrifice, that night, on the altar in front of that tree. A great multitude had assembled. In the crowd, was the missionary Winfred. The old priest of the religion of Thor had laid his hand on the shoulder of a little lad, the son of the chief of the tribe, who was playing by the great bonfire.

"Here," said the old man, with his voice vibrating as when a thick rope is strained by a ship swinging from her moorings, "here is the chosen one, the eldest son of the chief, the darling of the people. Harken, Bernhard, wilt thou go to Valhalla, where the heroes dwell with the gods, to bear a message to Thor?"

The boy answered, swift and clear:

"Yes, priest, I will go if my father bids me. Is it far away? Shall I run quickly? Must I take my bow and arrows for the wolves?"

The boy's father, the Chieftain Gundhar, standing among his bearded warriors, drew his breath deep, and leaned so heavily on the handle of his spear that the wood cracked. And his wife, Irma, bending forward from the ranks of women, pushed the golden hair from her forehead with one hand. The other dragged at the silver chain about her neck until the rough links pierced her flesh, and the red drops fell unheeded on her breast.

The old man stooped to lift a black hammer of stone from the ground—the sacred hammer of the god Thor. Summoning

all the strength of his withered arms, he swung it high in the air. It poised for an instant above the child's fair head, then turned to fall.

One keen cry shrilled out from where the women stood: "Me, take me! not Bernhard!"

The flight of the mother toward her child was swift as the falcon's swoop. But swifter still was the hand of the deliverer.

Winfred's heavy staff thrust mightily against the hammer's handle as it fell. Sideways it glanced from the old man's grasp, and the black stone, striking on the altar's edge, split in twain. A shout of awe and joy rolled along the living circle. The branches of the oak shivered. The flames leaped higher. As the shout died away the people saw the lady Irma, with her arms clasped around her child, and above them on the altar stone, Winfred, his face shining like the face of an angel. The story goes on to tell how the missionary, to vindicate his authority, cut down the great oak tree, and how the wood from it was used to build a Christian chapel.

LESSON 12.

THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST OF EUROPE. REVIEW.

Purpose of the Lesson.

To renew in the pupils a deep sense of the divine power in the Christian religion.

Beginning the Lesson Story.

This review lesson has a story and a fascinating one, which the teacher should tell, beginning somewhat as follows. Put on a blackboard the names of Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon. Ask regarding each of these conquerors, "how much territory did he conquer?" "How long did his kingdom last?" Draw out that Alexander, roughly speaking, conquered Persia; and his kingdom did not outlast his death. Cæsar made himself master of the Roman empire, and that empire lasted four centuries. Napoleon conquered Western Europe and died a captive on St. Helena. In this course of lessons we study the career of another conqueror. He began in a little province of the Roman empire, called Judea. He

quickly extended his sway, however, over little groups of people in all the cities from Jerusalem to Rome. Go on to tell of the victorious progress of this conqueror, Christ, through the stages recorded in the preceding lessons.

Discussing the Lesson.

1 and 2. Draw out that the Christians were most Christlike during the first period of this history, namely when they were being persecuted by pagan Roman society. Why? Did the persecution itself help to stir them to loyalty? Is there not also a further explanation in the fact that the Christians of this period were still only a few generations removed from the first disciples. Illustrate with a magnet and a series of nails, each exerting a weaker attraction, in proportion to its distance from the center of power. Was it inevitable, however, that later generations of Christians should grow more worldly and corrupt? Of the two following periods, in which were the Christians the more devoted to Christ? In the century of triumph, or in the Dark Ages? Which was the furthest removed in time from the earthly life of Jesus. Is there no other center of power for Christians, than far back in the past?

3. Draw out by questions the handicaps which Christianity had to overcome, among the pagan Romans. Jesus was a "barbarian," a Jew, a peasant, and He had been crucified as a criminal. The early disciples were not rich, nor well educated. How then can we explain the marvelous progress of the Christian faith. Bring out the power of its pure moral ideal, and of its gospel of love. Bring out also the unconquerable conviction of the Christians that God was on their side. But all these "explanations" are themselves in need of being explained. The ultimate conclusion must force itself on every pupil, God was in this movement.

4. In what ways was the task of the missionaries to Northern Europe easier than the task of the missionaries to the Roman empire. Bring out that the barbarians looked with a certain respect on anything Roman, in spite of the fact that they were pillaging the Roman cities. They were impressed by the stately church buildings, and the solemn ornate ritual of the church services. On the other hand, the successors of Paul, if they knew Greek, could find an audience in any city they might enter. The northern tribes spoke many and diverse languages. Missionary work in the empire had been facili-

tated by good roads, good ship service, and all the advantages of a high state of civilization. Augustine, Winfred, Patrick, and their comrades had to make their way through trackless forests, ford dangerous rivers, and fight with wild beasts. In this period therefore, as well as in the earlier period, we find Christianity triumphant over forbidding obstacles, through the power of God.

5. How far has this triumph already gone? How about India, China, Japan? Do you really believe that the whole earth will eventually be Christianized? What can we do to help it along? Has Christ triumphed in our hearts? Do we love Him as Polycarp, and Justin and Perpetua and Augustine loved Him? Should our Christianity to-day be any less mighty in its divine influence, than the Christianity of the early centuries?

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